

The Newham 7 A FIGHT FOR ALL WORKERS

BRUTAL ATTACKS ON blacks and Asians have become a fact of life in many inner city areas. However, racist attacks by fascist groups have met growing opposition from local communities. The fight for the right of the black and Asian community to defend themselves has been given national prominence by the Newham 7 Campaign.

On April 7 1985, the black community in the East London borough of Newham were subjected to a series of racist attacks by thugs who had been swilling beer in the Duke of Edinburgh pub, a well known watering hole for local racists. After topping up their courage for a few hours, these scum went on what defence barrister Rudy Narayan has called an "orgy of violence". One Asian youth was grabbed, beaten with a hammer, and had to leap from a moving car to escape. A second Asian was attacked with the hammer and then dumped in a ditch. When two Asians were attacked and sought safety in an nearby house, its windows were smashed. Responding to these attacks, Asian youth attempted to protect their community. Marching in a semi-military fashion, they headed for the Duke of Edinburgh pub.

Always quick to move to protect racists, police moved in to make arrests. Seven Asian youths, Khan Bahadur, Parvaiz Khan, Jyoti Rajappan, Amjad Ali, Zafar Khan, Jamal Chaudhri, and Habib Mohammad were listed and charged with offences ranging from criminal damage, affray, conspiracy, and possessing offensive weapons to common assault. Three white racists were also arrested but face less serious charges, while others were allowed by the police to get off scot-free.

On April 27 a 3,000 strong demonstration organised by the Newham 7 Defence Campaign was attacked by police. On the march reaching Forest Gate police station, police snitch squads jumped the temporary barriers to wade in and make arrests. With ten marchers arrested the organisers refused to allow the march to go further until their comrades were released. With extra police already being rushed to the area, march organisers were fobbed off by the police with the assurance of the pending release of those arrested. A ten minute wait became an hour, then two. Finally when the police were confident of their strength they moved in to break up what was left of the demonstration.

They turned and drove the march back, telling coloured youth to "Fuck off, Paki"; women were held by their hair while police, often with no visible identification, punched them. By the end of the afternoon, 34 anti-racists had been arrested many of them young blacks and Asians. Only eleven were

charged with any offences while the others face being charged months later or have simply been 'cautioned'. Police tactics inside the station were no different to those outside. A number of those arrested were beaten up, while others had weapons planted on them.

In protest against this brutal action of the police a second demonstration was organised. With policing on a scale comparable with the Six Counties or a striking mining village, the second demonstration was permitted to march around the back streets of Newham. On reaching its final rallying point, Plashet Park, police again moved in to make arrests. This time however, with the added advantage of having the iron park railing fence between themselves and the police, black and Asian youth met the attack with a barrage of missiles.

Loud cheers greeted the police's retreat, along with the sweet sound of the tinkle of broken glass as rocks and wooden blocks smashed their transit van windows. Later the better organised and trained police, using riot equipment and horses, were able to clear the area of anti-racists.

The police violence has not only been confined to the streets of Newham. Even outside the Old Bailey, Newham 7 campaigners have been attacked. Pickets have been racially abused, insulted and intimidated. Ten people have been arrested so far, including a 14-year old child for playing with a toy water pistol.

The first day of the trial, May 22, made headline news, when one of the defendants, Parvaiz Khan, was attacked by 15 prison officers for refusing to eat a pork pie for religious reasons. In the court itself, the lengths the police have gone to in order to intimidate and frame Asian youth have been exposed starkly. One of the main police witnesses broke down in court and admitted that she was in fact a police informer. Long before the Newham 7 incidents she had been asked by police to spy on local Asian youth.

This year has seen escalating racist attacks, already far outstripping those that provoked into existence the ineffectual Anti-Nazi League. The onus for fighting these attacks has so far fallen on the shoulders of the communities directly affected, with limited assistance from white anti-fascists.

The underlying problem with 'self-defence' campaigns such as the Newham 7 one is not their militancy, but the lack of support and involvement from the broad mass of the working class. An attack on any section of the oppressed is a precursor for a more widespread and general attack on working people. The question is not only one for the black community but for the entire working class. By participating in anti-racist struggles, racist and



Black and Asian youth don't need any more "community policing" but workers' Defence Corps.

chauvinistic attitudes amongst white workers can be more effectively undermined.

Fundamental to the experience of the black and Asian community has been the right to self defence. These communities have no truck with liberal nonsense about 'community policing' and 'accountability'.

The working class in Britain may have only limited experience of organising physically to protect itself but as the struggle of the miners showed, such ideas are eagerly picked up by the best militants. During the miners' strike *The Leninist* raised the demand for Workers' Defence Corps to protect pickets, demonstrations, meetings, and mining communities from police attacks.

The black and Asian community need such organisations now as much as the miners ever did during their strike. Without such organisations the daily racist attacks cannot be effectively repelled. The Newham 7 demonstrations are in themselves an example of the necessity for organised workers' defence. We should not whine that the police *did* attack; that was inevitable. No, instead we should

organise to ensure that when that assault *does* come, they come off worse. The ability of the police to attack the demonstration with ease and impunity and to meet no strong organised opposition; that is the point that should concern us.

Revolutionary groups like the Revolutionary Communist Party or the Socialist Workers' Party, which a few years ago played at setting up caricatures of Workers' Defence Corps to protect the black community, nowadays fight shy of that demand. With racist attacks and police terror spreading, large sections of the left remain silent. The SWP strategy of fighting racism with an ANL Popular Front led by them, TV personalities and football managers never provided the class with a real alternative. While the fascists marched, the ANL lolled in the sun, listened to rock bands, and applauded Labourite windbags pledging themselves to 'fight the fascists'. The main problem for Asians and blacks in this country has always been the bourgeois state, not so much the fascists, the very same state that the Labour Party defends and presides over when in power. An

organisation which broke from the reformist outlook of the ANL was Workers' Against Racism (WAR). Yet this group in reality was little more than propaganda front for media conscious RCP, confirmed by the fact that even with racist attacks on the increase in East London WAR has literally disappeared as the RCP have dropped their work in this sphere in order to pursue bigger, more profitable fish.

Carnivals and 'balloons against the nazis' do not unduly worry the racists or the police, neither will the substitutionalist publicity stunts of political sects like the RCP. On the other hand militant class organisations like Workers' Defence Corps could do more than 'worry' the fascists and their friends in blue: they could beat these scum off our streets.

■ FREE THE NEWHAM SEVEN

■ SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!

■ FOR WORKERS' DEFENCE CORPS, NOT COMMUNITY POLICING!

The PPPS AGM

FAR FROM the victory for the Chaterite camp being a victory for "class politics", objectively the opposite is true. The *Morning Star* has taken what could be an irrevocable step away from the Communist Party and towards the Labourite swamp.

Far from the *Morning Star* now playing the role of an *Iskra* it looks like becoming nothing more than the docile mouthpiece for left reformists like Ron Todd, Arthur Scargill, and Tony Benn. Certainly if the Labour Party left mobilises its supporters on a large scale to take out sharecards there is little or no hope of the *Morning Star* being won back to the Party which not only founded it but sustained it and sold it for over 50 years.

It is both ironic as well as tragic that the Communist Party is now deprived of a daily voice. It is ironic that the result of the 'ally yourself with anybody and everybody', Eurocommunist image of the Party leadership there has been created a Broad (anti-Communist Party) Alliance including not only pro-Chaterite centrists and Straight Leftists in our Party but also anti-CP forces such as the USSR worshipping NCP and *Proletarian*, as well as Labourite lefts who would not say no to being given a daily paper by the role seeking Tony Chater.

It is tragic that when the working class in Britain faces the most vicious Tory government this century, the Frankenstein PPPS monster has turned against the Party which created it in 1946.

But all is not yet lost. If a well reasoned, sustained ideological offensive is launched to expose the rotten liquidationism of Chater, literally thousands of good communists who voted for the Management Committee slate can be won back to the Party. Of course, Euro dominated Party publications such as *Marxism Today* and *Focus* have not a cat in hell's chance of convincing these communists of the central importance of the Party to the future struggle of the working class in Britain. There is even a danger that the tendency of certain hardline Euros to argue for political expulsions from the Party and their complete intolerance of other views will directly play into Chater's liquidationist hands.

Because of this it is essential for unofficial Party publications like *The Leninist* to take the lead in fighting against liquidationism. We must prove to comrades that the *Morning Star* rebellion has gone way beyond the bounds of an inner-Party dispute and that now it represents the greatest threat of liquidationism.

Comrade Gordon McLennan is quite right to "thank all those who, whatever their view on the decisions" of the Special Congress "recognised the need to support those candidates for the Management Committee pledged to restore relations with the Party."

He and all other comrades in the Party leadership now have the duty to ensure that far from there being a witchhunt of "factionalists" the conditions of free and open debate promised by comrade Nina Temple at the Special Congress are created.

Only by rigidly sticking to the pledge that there "will be no political expulsions" through building "a tolerant Party where different views can be freely expressed" and where comrades will not be excluded or labelled", as the comrade promised, can the Communist Party's organisational unity be maintained and a disastrous schism in our ranks be prevented.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Quitting

I am writing to inform you that I have decided to quit the CPGB as I feel I can no longer function in my District which is carved up between the *Morning Star* faction (which constitute the majority) and the Euros. The result of the Special Congress (although it seemed to me a foregone conclusion before the event) played a great part in my making this decision ...

I do however wish those comrades around *The Leninist* the best of luck in the battle for a reformed CPGB and the consequent disposal of that pseudo-Marxist document the *British Road to Socialism*.

When things have changed considerably within the CPGB I may consider re-joining. But at this moment in time I feel I would be better off using my energies in trying to foster communist polities in my union the NUM and others e.g. power and transport workers to prepare for future battles. This does not mean that I believe that trade union or economic struggle will be the be all and end all; it's just that in the District I am isolated and have no allies whatsoever.

Yours in comradeship
Nye Westgate
Nous

Alec Long replies

Comrade Westgate must understand that he is in fact a part — and an important part — of the fight for a reformed Communist Party in Britain. Wishing us "luck" is a nice sentiment, but at the end of the day it hardly takes our struggle forward very far. Bluntly, we do not need luck, we need people we need *Leninists*. Comrade Westgate, we can assure you that your political "isolation" will not end by leaving the Party. The only chance that comrades like yourself have of ending your isolation is by taking *The Leninist* and by using it and its ideas to break out and build yourself a base.

The comrade must know that without an organisation to back him up and to guide his work, his attempt to "foster communist polities" in his union is doomed. What can an individual do comrade? One person alone can either remain in extreme isolation and impotency, or in an attempt to win a base, adapt himself to the reformist consciousness of the mass. An individual who is part of a national organisation with a national newspaper however, can actually have a real impact.

We sometimes call correspondence like comrade Westgate's "give-me-a-ring" letters. They seem to be saying, "I agree with *The Leninist* and the need for a reformed CPGB — when you get one give me a ring." We urge comrade Westgate to re-consider, for the truth is without people like you, we never will see a Leninist Communist Party in Britain.

Gays

I have just read the article in the May 1985 issue of *The Leninist* concerning gay rights. As a 'closet' homosexual and a socialist I found the article very interesting. In an attempt to meet other gay people I recently went to two gay group meetings. There I met some very narrow, effete and, most alarmingly of all, reactionary people. Naively I had assumed that as gays are completely oppressed that there would be radical gays at these meetings — how wrong I was!

About the article — I agree entirely with the writer's assertion that homosexuality threatens the stability of that oh-so-sacred of economic units, the nuclear family. (The family is so important in imperialist Britain, we even have a fucking ROYAL FAMILY).

Therefore gay rights is a class issue — challenging bourgeois morality and bourgeois power. Only through a socialist revolution can gay, black, women's, and workers' liberation take place.

I've learnt that, despite gay oppression, there are many reactionary gays. I heard one gay suggest gays forge closer links with the police! And this after the sickening police brutality witnessed during the miners' struggle! Two other gays spoke of the possibility of improving Britain's economic performance by abolishing trade unions and 'restrictive practices'. After such depressing experiences it was a relief to read the article in *The Leninist* which recognised the economic basis of gay oppression and linked it to the revolutionary struggle of all oppressed groups. It is a class issue and what I'd like to do is meet other working class gays and start fighting back against this barbaric system — imperialism/capitalism.

I have only read *The Leninist* a few times but I like its uncompromising stand. Its support for Ireland's courageous freedom fighters (the IRA and INLA) is admirable. Once again about the article: working class gays were urged to join the Communist Party of *The Leninist* to fight the oppression they face daily from bourgeois society and its perverted morality. And that's why I'm writing this letter ...

Dave Edwards
Preston.

Socialist Ignorance

I recently came across the review carried in the March issue of your paper dealing with an article of mine on "Straight Left" which appeared in issue number one of *Socialist Organiser Forum*.

After a series of incoherent and inaccurate allegations as to *Socialist Organiser's* call for a general strike during the miners' strike, our alleged "anti-communism", and our relationship to Eurocommunism, coupled with the traditional slanders of the free trade union *Solidarnosc*, your parting shot is to claim:

"Straight Left might seem to the uninitiated to be a Labourite paper but, blockheads of SO, it is in reality a highly organised and well known faction in the CPGB."

This claim stands in contrast to the contents of a letter by the editor of *Straight Left* in the May issue of *New Socialist*:

I would like to correct the impression... that *Straight Left* is in some way involved in the internal affairs of the Communist Party. This is not the case — nor has it ever been. Both myself and the deputy editors are members of the Labour Party, as are all those who sit on our editorial advisory panel.

Of course, that *Straight Left* might have some involvement in both the Labour Party and the CPGB is a possibility. If this were the case, then your review would not so much be inaccurate as a piece of malicious witch-hunting designed to give aid to the Labour Party right wing — with whom you clearly share the belief that revolutionary socialists should not be in the Labour Party.

The heading over your review — 'Amazing Ignorance' — was indeed a profoundly accurate one. I cannot help feeling, however, that the ignorance, comrades, is yours, not mine.

Yours in Solidarity,
Stan Crooke
London

Ian Mahoney replies:
This letter is so toweringly idiotic that at one point we were seriously considering printing it without a

reply. But then, on reflection, we simply could not resist it.

Socialist Organiser has not only been dumb enough to print its original article claiming that *Straight Left* is a Labourite paper with no Communist Party connections, it has even been breathtakingly stupid enough to go into print a second time to defend its lunk-headed assertion. It is open minded enough to mark, dear reader, to entertain the "possibility" that *Straight Left* may have "some involvement" in the Communist Party, despite disclaimers from the 'editor' of *Straight Left* who denies 'involvement' in "the internal affairs of the Communist Party."

So there you have it! The people who circulated the alternative recommended list at the 38th CPGB Congress were evidently Labour Party members! So, presumably, were the people caught red-handed passing round *Congress Truth*! Charlie Woods was obviously expelled for operating under the direction of a Labour Party faction, a sneaky little group which wrote, printed, and distributed through the post to hundreds of Communist Party members the pamphlet *The Crisis in the Communist Party*. Not only has *The Leninist* got it wrong and Stan got it right, but also suffering from our "Amazing Ignorance" is Channel 4, *Focus*, *Marxism Today*, the *Morning Star*, the entire Communist Party Executive Committee, the New Communist Party, *Socialist Worker*, *Workers' Power*, *Spartacist Britain*/ *Workers' Hammer*, the *Guardian*, the *Financial Times*, etc., ...

Perhaps Mr. Crooke is attempting to brazen out his political 'boo-boo' by simply throwing mud at our organisation. No, Stan, we do not believe that the place for revolutionary socialists at the moment is in the Labour Party. But to try imply from this that we would line up with the Labour Party right wing in its attempts to witch-hunt revolutionaries out and that this is why we are suggesting that *Straight Left* is a Communist organisation really is very cheap. What is more we have explicitly criticised the New Communist Party for advocating the political expulsions from the Labour Party. Did you read this position of ours Mr. Crooke? But then again, do you read anything apart from *Socialist Organiser* and *New Socialist*? Do you ever watch television, even? What planet exactly are you and your *Socialist Organiser* chums living on?

Anarcho-Stalinists

Our last letter began: "The Tory Employer offensive has produced a deep crisis within the British working class movement. In these circumstances we have a responsibility to do all we can to encourage and develop a united fightback."

The Revolutionary Democratic Group fully endorses the united front and stands opposed to the twin enemies within our movement, i.e. popular frontism and sectarianism. This is not merely "laudable" as Jack Conrad notes but, more importantly, it is politically correct from a class point of view.

It was from this entirely principled standpoint that we wrote a preliminary letter to you urging greater co-operation. And whilst it is true that you have not had the opportunity to be fully apprised of our ideological standpoint, that is no excuse for your reply, tinged with sectarianism.

A truly Leninist reply would have taken the opportunity of endorsing the united front and condemning popular frontism and sectarianism. This would have proven to all workers reading your paper the solidarity of 'Leninism' and the RDG in the face of the onslaught.

Instead you advance a number of spurious arguments whose

motivation is quite possibly an anarcho-Stalinist hatred of 'Trotskyism'. We are not a "Trotskyist" grouping, but even if we were, sectarianism is counterproductive from a class point of view.

Your first spurious argument is to misrepresent our proposal. You imply that we are proposing a merger and that this would be unprincipled because of "state capitalism", etc. Let us be clear. We have not and are not proposing a merger. Had we done so it would indeed have been unprincipled.

Second, let us briefly consider "state capitalism" which you use to try to frighten your audience in the face of our proposal. Apparently because of this the RDG "monstrously" (shock horror) refuses to defend the Soviet ruling class. This reminded us of how the ultra lefts tried to frighten Lenin with "state capitalism" in "Left Wing Childishness". Naturally he refused to be intimidated.

The existence of state capitalism does not determine our attitude to the Soviet Union. We are not the SWP. State capitalism existed in Lenin's time and so did private capital which was reintroduced in the 1920's New Economic Policy. But as Lenin pointed out, state capitalism under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is one thing and under the dictatorship of the proletariat is something quite different.

Our attitude to the Soviet Union is determined by the fact that there is no revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat. The fact that it was abandoned by the CPSU in practice under Stalin is connected to the fact that it was later abandoned in theory by the CPGB. We would be very happy to debate this further but we would not let such a debate stand in the way of greater co-operation.

Thirdly, size is irrelevant to correct politics. Some of the largest groups have bad politics and some of the smallest have better politics as far as working class interests are concerned. Yet you advance 'sizist' rather than political arguments. You seem to reject the possibility of closer co-operation because we are a "motley and impotent crew" (is this the pot calling the kettle black?) with a "lack of numbers, etc."

In terms of size we are indeed weak but in terms of class politics we are more powerful, because of the class potential those politics represent. That is something which we are quite prepared to test against all other tendencies, 'Trotskyists', 'Leninists', and the rest.

Finally, may we comment on the praise you heap on your own self importance and the uniqueness of your own tendency. This is classic Stalinist self proclaimed vanguardism. It has little in common with Lenin's notion of a vanguard which can't proclaim its own importance but has to earn it by winning the respect of all the militants.

Our original call for greater co-operation still stands. We look forward to a Leninist rather than a Stalinist reply.
In comradeship
Revolutionary Democratic Group
Edinburgh

Ian Mahoney replies

Perhaps the crux of our disagreement lies in the fact that your concept of a "united front" and ours appears to vary considerably. For us, a united front is a tactic employed by revolutionaries to win workers away from the grip of reformism, to expose in practice the treachery of the leaders of the working class. It is a tactic aimed at breaking the isolation of the vanguard of the class. Therefore our reticence is not a symptom of

"sizism" as you suggest, but simply a question of objectively assessing the point of uniting with forces which have little or no links with strategically important sections of our class. You appear to reduce the revolutionary tactic of the united front to the level of *The Leninist* and the RDG proclaiming its "solidarity" in the face of the "Tory-Employer" offensive. OK comrades, neither one of us likes the bourgeoisie very much. That hardly takes the struggle for the forging of a revolutionary vanguard of the class forward very far, does it?

We have no intention of seeking to imply that you propose a merger — that would be as ludicrous to us as I'm sure it is to you — and having reread our original exchange with you in *The Leninist* no. 19 (April 1985), I find no implication of this in comrade Jack Conrad's reply. Also, the charge of "sectarianism" that you level against us is a little hard to substantiate, we believe. We have in the past shown ourselves willing to work with many forces on the basis of areas of agreement. This however could hardly be dignified with the title of 'united front'. If you have any specific proposals for joint work, please inform us of them, but I'm afraid for us "greater cooperation" does not equal a 'united front' and if you seriously believe this to be the case then you should study Lenin a little more closely.

If your proposal for work on areas of joint agreement is genuine then approach us with specifics. If your approach is a polemical device to propose a grandiose "united front" to practically anything that moves on the revolutionary left, then recoil in horror shouting "sectarian" when you are quite correctly refused, then congratulations, comrades: we admit to being 'separatists' and proud of it. All too often in our Party, the word 'sectarian' is substituted for the phrase 'having principles'. We feel that yet another group branding us with this charge will not kill us.

As to your comments about the Soviet Union, they are either profoundly ignorant or profoundly dishonest. Are you seriously trying to claim a theoretical continuity between your branding of the USSR as "state capitalist" and Lenin's historically specific use of the term? Are you seriously suggesting that Lenin would have concurred with your own view that there is a new capitalist ruling class in the Soviet Union? Do you seriously believe that Lenin would have joined you and your SWP co-thinkers in refusing to defend the USSR against imperialism's war drive? Do you really think that Lenin would have agreed with what is no doubt your position: that twenty million Soviet citizens were wrong to lay down their lives to defend their socialist homeland in World War II, that they should have in fact stood for the defeat of the USSR by fascist Germany?

Frankly, yes, I am afraid we do find such views 'shocking', 'horrifying' and we believe all militant workers should. 'Shocking', 'horrifying', and repulsive.

Ravden of the Yard

I think you would like to know of the activity of a local Eurocommunist teacher in East London. The Deputy Head of Daneford School and Party member, Colin Ravden, recently announced that he was organising a careers' convention after school hours. As a NUT member he knew of course that such 'after hours' work was not permitted during the present teachers' dispute. 'Progressive' organisations such as the police, the army, Barclays Bank, and commercial YTS schemes were invited. The NUT members demanded that these disgraceful invitations be withdrawn, which the Head refused to do.

A large section of the school's pupils come from Asian backgrounds, so not surprisingly the Bangladeshi Youth Organisation along with the local Trades Council and NUT members decided to organise a peaceful picket of the school on the night of the convention. The majority of parents and children refused to cross this picket. Both the Head and Ravden, however responded by trying to instruct boys to cross the picket and come to the 'scab' convention.

After an hour and a half a delegation from the picket went into the school to talk to the remaining boys and parents. The Head and Ravden tried physically to throw this delegation out of the school. Having failed to do this, they shamefully decided to call the police and ask them to arrest three members of the delegation. Two teachers from the school were arrested along with a Communist Party member and President of the local Trades Council comrade Mick Gavin.

The two teachers have been charged with obstruction and comrade Gavin with breach of the peace. Their cases are coming up in early July.

The fact that a union member and communist, Ravden, felt no qualms about calling the police to arrest his own union members is outrageous enough, but what is even more scandalous is that he knew that the third person being arrested was a Party member.

The Euros' practice of calling in the scum in blue to settle political matters seems to be becoming a habit with them. (Remember 'Chalmers of the Yard' and his dirty record?)

At the moment attempts are being made to throw Ravden out of the NUT. It seems as though the Euro leadership will not want to do anything about the matter. His local branch, Victoria in Hackney, is Straight Left controlled. Given its current inner-Party retreat and its innate conservatism the matter would probably never reach most Party members. Thank God for the letters columns of *The Leninist!* Yours
Pete Lane
East London

Mr Angry — again

It would seem that I made a real boob over David Kitson having gone to Israel. In mitigation of the offence, it should be noted that I read a report in a newspaper which asserted such. Nevertheless, repeating a smear is on a par with having fabricated it. In that case, I owe him an apology, and give it right now: I apologise unreservedly.

As for me being his "comrade", let me quickly disillusion him on that score. Any man who argues that Russia is a socialist society is no comrade of mine. I have given you my idea of what Russia is, and I have no intention of altering that. To my mind the facts speak for themselves.

If Russia is the great threat all you ignorant white-collar lefties say it is to capitalism, why is it that the multi-national corporations all rush, and have all rushed from the erection of that state, to invest their capital in it? Look at these few names for an example of what I mean: Ford, Caterpillar, U.S. Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Massey-Harris, Massey-Ferguson, Commins Engines, Fiat, Coca-Cola and many more have all erected vast factories in Russia and in Eastern Europe. Many of these giant corporations have closed down in this country, and British workers have gone into unemployment and poverty, while these corporations have re-opened in the great workers' paradise in the lands East of Checkpoint Charlie.

Why do multi-national

corporations do that? What makes Goodyear shut their premises in Glasgow West, and re-open in the Russian Empire? Well, it is obvious, isn't it? They get higher rates of profit on their investments. There are no communists over there to cause strikes, and stir up discontent among the workforce. Anyone who tries to interfere with the process of production in Russia and parts lands up in the Gulag Archipelago but quick. That is what you characters support, and you have the sheer gall to expect a genuine Left-winger like me to call you comrade? Get lost! We workers here in Britain need you like we need a second head.

I am, Sir,
H.C. Mullin.
Glasgow

Cheap Snare

Please find enclosed £5 for a year's sub to *The Leninist*. We were very pleased with the May number and agree with nearly all of it. We must point out however that we very much resent the cheap sneer at the "muddy feminist mystics at Greenham Common". These people are fighting the same enemy as *The Leninist* fights.

Moreover they are capable of learning — their opposition to nuclear weapons has already been linked to the struggle of the miners and the people of Namibia. It is, in our opinion, most unleninist to suppose that the working class can afford to reject potential allies.

We wish you all success
R Bond
M Bond
Isle of Wight

Euro Vote?

Why did both your organisation and Malcolm Bride the candidate who withdrew so dramatically from this year's PPPS AGM, urge us to vote for the Euro backed candidates? I understand what you say about not supporting last year's revisionism against this year's, but surely it is worse to support this year's? If the Euros had got their hands on the *Morning Star* it would have been a disaster. Unless and until *The Leninist* of something like it becomes a mass circulation daily, the Party and the working class needs and deserves a newspaper supporting them and giving a socialist point of view, which means Chater's *Morning Star* rather than a Eurocommunist *Star*. (ghastly thought).

I'd heard rumours that the *Star* faction were contemplating a split from the Party if they lost the paper. But M.K. thinks their victory at the AGM may have given them confidence to form a rival party as hinted (as you say) at the end of *Stop*

the Rot. I gather you oppose any such split.

If it does come and they form a viable group with 3000 to 5000 members, will you take your supporters into it? Is it that you would rather work inside a larger party with a hopelessly Euro leadership but a lot of discontented members, than a smaller party whose policy is closer to your own but whose members are all satisfied with it?

Speaking of the AGM, were you as disgusted as me when the arch-Euro, Ron 'bash the Left' Halverson spoke about what a "revolutionary paper" should not do? How dare the likes of him talk about revolution!
Zoe Ellwin
Cambridge

Ian Mahoney replies:

As far as our organisation was concerned, the decision to back the candidates of the Communist Party did not represent a break with the essence of our original 'a plague on both your houses' position.

In previous years we have called for an abstention in the PPPS AGM's because we have characterised both the Party position and Chater's as equally liquidationist and equally dangerous. These AGM's were essentially an extension of the struggle within the Communist Party so our abstentionist position, while we recognised that it was not an ideal call, paralleled our assessment that both wings of the Party were fighting on the basis of revisionist and opportunist platforms. Neither one could thus claim to be pro-Party in the Leninist sense.

However, Chater's liquidationism has now moved from the potential to the very very real. For this AGM, the anti-Communist Party New Communist Party was drafted in to prop up the management committee and a whole section of non-Party elements were mobilised on essentially an anti-Party ticket. Did you not also find it "disgusting" comrade, when trade union bureaucrats got up at the London meeting, disparaged our Party and claim that they had as much right as the Communist Party to have a say in the political direction of our paper? From the rumours we hear, this is a position that Chater himself is now openly espousing.

Thus the debate had qualitatively shifted from one being about what side one took in the inner Party battle to one being about whether you were for the Communist Party or against the Communist Party. Faced with such a choice we stood unashamedly with our Party against the rotten bloc that Chater has lumped together.

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed names and addresses, and certain details.

More important than ever

The drubbing of the Party candidates at the PPPS AGM and the Chaterite slate's clear victory poses a great danger for our movement. Chater has taken the *Morning Star* out of Communist Party politics and it will take a united and sustained effort to win it back. To do so will require *The Leninist* taking a lead in exposing Chater's liquidationism and the danger of following him and his faction. Because of the pernicious influence of Eurocommunism the leadership of our Party has lost the loyalty of thousands of good communists; if our Party is not to disintegrate the Euros must be forced to end the use of bureaucratic centralism and the threat of political expulsions. To do this it will again take *The Leninist* to give the lead and to point the way forward towards the democratic centralist mass CPGB our class so desperately needs today. All this requires your financial support. Last month our £600 fund was only £450; this short fall must be made up if our fight is to succeed.

■ The miners fight back ■ The miners fight back ■



Rank and file organise

One of the most important developments in the aftermath of the defeat of the miners' Great Strike was the formation of the National Rank and File Miners' Movement — a development long argued for and fully backed by *The Leninist*. Since its formation the NRFMM has taken the lead in championing the sacked and imprisoned miners and their plight fighting for militant direct action on their behalf. Darren Moore is the vice-chair of the NRFMM and editor of its newly launched paper the *Rank and File Miner*.

The Leninist: Has the National Rank and File Miners' Movement (NRFMM) really clarified its relationship to the official NUM leadership? After all, the NUM NEC condemned the first Rank and File conference (for a report of this see *The Leninist* No. 20, May 1985). Could you clarify for our readers the relationship between the rank and file body and the official leadership?

Darren Moore: The answer to that one is 'no', we don't know the relationship with national because it has not been clarified. What we are hoping is that we will get some sort of backing from the leadership in as much as we are doing the work of the union. We are trying to put the union back in order, to build up the full strength of the union again.

Now the fact that we are getting together over area boundaries in order to do it is one of the problems that the union can't overcome, because officially you're stuck to your own area and each area has its own little niche. That's what kept us back. We want to organise on a national scale which will perhaps mean we have problems with the leadership about some of the things involved in that. I mean, I'd like to have some sort of meeting or comeback from national on what their position is, but at the moment they just seem to be passing the buck, you know, 'refer it back to your area' and so on.

We are getting some support from branch officials, but then again there's an awful lot of crap branch

officials who've tried to kick it in the head and stop sacked blokes getting involved. Some people would like to stamp on us (the rightwing definitely would like to stamp on us), but generally it's not clear at all what the position is from national. We're hoping that we will get some sort of support.

The Leninist: What have been the main problems in getting this movement off the ground — hostility from officials or demoralisation among the men?

Darren Moore: The main problem is that the strike has ended, we've been defeated; not simply defeated, the men believe we have been smashed, so people have gone back to work and are demoralised. They are saying 'what can we do?' They've worked hard in the strike and they want now to settle down, sink a few pints, and enjoy themselves. The majority now want to get back into the routine.

But then again there are a lot of activists who are waiting for some sort of campaign, some sort of push. That's why we initiated this, to fill that gap. We took the initiative shall we say. We were more or less told 'you go back to your area and you look after yourself' and that's the way the strike ended, on a federated basis. What's kept us back for all these years is that we haven't organised across these barriers.

The miners' strike is over, we've been defeated, it's more important now than ever to rebuild the fighting strength of the union because

they're on for annihilating us. The spur for it came from the sacked lads because every good activist in the union has been sickened by the fact that seven hundred of the best lads have been left at the gate and there's F-all that's being done about it.

The Leninist: Do you think it's fair to say that despite a year's struggle and all the problems that arose in the union, many miners still have too many illusions in official structures and the old fashioned type of union routinism?

Darren Moore: That's a fair comment. I mean, I'm surprised at how many illusions people still do have. We found out a lot from Leicester because no officials came out on strike, just thirty rank and file lads who had to organise themselves. But we sorted ourselves out before other people did.

Although, in Kent you've got a lot of decent branch officials who did the work: they got the lads out picketing, raising the money, they are perhaps one of the more progressive areas; you've got Yorkshire. We were six months into the strike before they even started letting blokes fund-raise, they were even banning them from going outside their area.

A lot of lads don't even realise half the problems with the officialdom. They were just involved on the picket line, they did what the branch said, they just did it without question. But as soon as you started to question then you realised what the problems were.

The Leninist: How do you feel your second conference went; are you hopeful for the future?

Darren Moore: If I wasn't hopeful for the future, I wouldn't do it. I know it's a lot of hard work and I've got no illusions about how difficult it's going to be, especially if we do get a lot of resistance from the top. But there are people all over the country just waiting to hear about something getting things moving so I'm optimistic in that way, in that at each colliery we meet people who think that way. We've met people here today for the first time who've said 'this is just what we need'. And they have more contacts so we'll get in contact with them and tell them because they may be waiting for something like this. So I'm optimistic in that way.

In London the support groups are cracking up, they've got nothing left to work for. They're sending their money to a black hole up in Sheffield and nobody's coming back to tell them 'well this is how your money is being spent' or 'this is what we're doing'. They're just sending the money and that's it. They are getting no feedback, so they are dying.

The conference: well it's the first one I'd chaired and I'm not a brilliant chair, but we're learning all the while. It was smaller than the last one, but with the last one we had a conference where people spoke for about two and a half hours about the horror stories from their pit, but we didn't get anything done. What I tried to push is that we wanted

people to do work. We've got resolutions passed now, we've sorted out what we're about. We're not perfect by any means but we want to move on. We want to get organised because the bigger we get the more people we need to help with the practical organisation. There are so many things to do and not enough people to do them. We need education, yes, but the way you learn is by being chucked in at the deep end really.

The Leninist: Finally, you've mentioned that the NRFMM has a clear set of aims. Part of the aims which the movement sets for itself is the campaign for the expulsion of scab sections of the NUM. We say that expelling whole areas really plays into the hands of the scab officials. What is your personal view?

Darren Moore: This is where we will have to agree to differ because I definitely do think that is right. I mean, looking from my point of view in Leicestershire, I'm still a non-financial member of the union because I refused to pay my back subs up; in fact all of the thirty who were on strike in Leicestershire have, because we are unwilling to go back into the branches and to be disciplined, and then to be disciplined and victimised by the area. They have already voted to change the rules throughout the branches, so they could cut off any appeal to national. If the new rules go through we will be able to appeal right through to national if they are accepted in our area. But then again the National Executive might be rightwing by then and throw our appeal out and we'll be left in the middle of nowhere.

We've fought for a national union for twelve months; no one wants a national union more than me but we still haven't got a national union. And the only way I can see of going about it in my area is to expel the area and let the people who did stand up and be counted, let them form the branches there. That's the way I see forward. It's like a cancer: you've got to cut it out!

I know the weaknesses: I know they want that. If I thought there was a way of getting the union back on its feet without taking drastic measures like that, I'd agree with it, but I can't so that's where we stand.

■ The first issue of the National Rank and File Miners' Movement paper is out now. *Rank and File Miner* number one is available from NRFMM, c/o London Miners' Support Group, Camden Nalgo Office, Town Hall Extension, Euston Road, London NW1. Individual copies are 25p each plus 15 pence postage and packaging. Reduced rates for bulk orders are available, for further details contact the NRFMM on 01-278 4444, ext. 2827.

■ The NRFMM has speaking teams and if you want to arrange a speaker contact A. Robe, Doncaster (0302) 844446, or T. Clegg, Doncaster (0302) 845655.

■ If you wish to send donations to the NRFMM write to A. Robe, 74 The Crescent, Dunsford, Doncaster, South Yorks. Tel: 0302-844446. Make cheques out to 'National Rank and File Miners' Movement'. Bank Acc. 01080385, Midland Bank, Stainforth, Doncaster, South Yorks.

■ Arthur Scargill will be speaking at a public meeting in mid-July to launch a campaign for the reinstatement of the sacked men and the release of miners in prison. The meeting has been called by the Kent Area of the NUM and the South East Region of the TUC. It will be at Friends House, Euston Road, London at 7.30 on July 18.

■ The miners fight back ■ The miners fight back ■

An acid test for the workers

IN THE aftermath of the miners' Great Strike we have heard countless statements from various opportunists in our Communist Party about their supposed outstanding role during the heroic 12 months. Of course reality was somewhat different.

For example although the Euro dominated leadership of our Young Communist League praised itself for having "made a substantial contribution to the miners' strike," it is unlikely that many miners would have noticed it, for the fact was that for the last eight months of the strike it did not even manage to produce a single edition of its paper *Challenge*.

Other opportunists may not have been quite so sleepy but the medals they presented themselves with were equally undeserved. Indeed, far from fighting by any means necessary for a miners' victory they all did their best to keep the strike within the safe bounds of bourgeois respectability and bourgeois law.

This was most clearly seen over the question of miners' violence. Faced with thousands of miners who were prepared to meet police violence with workers' violence, who were even prepared to organise hit squads, all the opportunists refused to back such actions.

As a result of this it is hardly surprising that in the immediate aftermath of the strike, despite the self congratulations, they have all studiously avoided mentioning the plight of the imprisoned miners and their supporters: the class war prisoners.

At the 39th (Special) Congress both the composite resolutions on the miners' strike — one supported by the Euro/McLennan leadership and the other by the liquidationist pro-*Morning Star* grouping — failed to call for the immediate release of the class war prisoners. So while both resolutions backed demands for the reinstatement of those who have lost their jobs through victimisation this was not linked to the fight to create a movement around the class war prisoners.

Comrades Mick McGahey and George Bolton, despite ample opportunity at the congress, refused to demand a militant campaign to secure the release of the prisoners. Indeed, under their leadership the Scottish Area of the NUM has gone out of its way to split the sacked men from those imprisoned, arguing that they are two completely separate issues. This claim is based on the devious logic that while the sacked men must campaign to pressure the NCB for reinstatement this is not the case with those who are imprisoned by the state. They are therefore meant to have nothing in common. But this is not just devious logic, ignoring as it does the role of the state behind the NCB; it is a cowardly desertion of responsibility almost amounting to treachery.

As to the *Morning Star* itself: well, although the editorial of May 28 1985 feels not the slightest compunction about demanding that the Greenham women jailed for not paying a £25 fine should be "released immediately", there has not been one editorial referring to the jailed miners and certainly not one raising the demand that they be immediately freed.

And showing their utter contempt for the sacked and imprisoned miners the *Morning Star* Management Committee ruled out of order a motion submitted by comrade Barbara Lewis on the

question for the PPPS AGM.

There can be no excuse for suppressing this motion. Its "crime" was to declare that: "Whatever offence" the imprisoned miners "have been found guilty of, we must defend them because they are class war prisoners." The motion called for the *Morning Star* to "devote the same space and energy to supporting the class war prisoners" as it did during the miners' strike in supporting the NUM.

Specifically the motion declared that the *Morning Star* "should regularly report those entering jail, those being released, and the problems faced by their families." Finally it stated that there "must be no turning our backs on these brave men." The *Morning Star* "should campaign for the release of the imprisoned men and demand that they and all sacked miners are given their old jobs back." The *Morning Star* "should carry a weekly list of those imprisoned, where they can be written to, and should provide space for letters from jailed miners to the paper" and should back "all campaigns fighting for amnesty for the sacked and imprisoned men."

To rule this out of order for whatever reason in bourgeois law or procedural nicety shows the *Morning Star* faction's attitude towards the class struggle and their unwillingness to stand by its victims. Of course at the AGM of the PPPS surprise, surprise, not only had Barbara Lewis and Malcolm Bride, the proposer and seconder of the banned motion on sacked and imprisoned miners, submitted 'backdoor' amendments making exactly the same political and organisational proposals as their original motion, but they had been joined all of a sudden by comrade George Bolton and the Chatterite Mike Hicks. We very much hope this represents a change of heart but we fear that it was a move dictated by a fear of being outflanked and a desire to use the question of the sacked and imprisoned miners as a stick with which to beat their opponents at the AGM.

Certainly the reason why both the Euros and the *Morning Star* groupings are inclined to desert the class war prisoners is simple. Both factions are wedded to the reformism enshrined in the *British Road to Socialism*. The imprisoned miners have been found guilty of flouting the laws passed by the very hallowed institution that the opportunists look to for legislating into being the socialist order.

Of course there is not a cat in hell's chance of the thoroughly bourgeois parliament becoming step by gradual step an organ of the revolution. Those who suggest such a thing is possible not only desert Marxism-Leninism but as the aftermath of the miners' strike has shown they desert those who have by force of circumstance been compelled to fall foul of bourgeois legality.

What for the opportunists and their utopian *British Road* appears to stand above society is in fact the masked reality of bourgeois class rule. Parliament and the laws it passes are designed to hide the reality of naked class violence and is in truth nothing more than an expression of that violence with which ultimately the bourgeoisie secures its rule.

The miners' Great Strike revealed the real face of capitalist rule that lies behind the parliamentary mask. Indeed, it proved that parliament

itself far from standing above the class struggle is a weapon in the armoury of the bourgeoisie to be used against the working class.

If we understand this we can also understand why the very act of committing oneself to a reformist programme, at the heart of which lies parliament, inevitably leads to betraying the working class itself and going over to the enemy camp. Along this fateful road there lies one compromise of principle after another.

Some in the leadership of our CPGB have already taken the step of attacking the mass picketing by Yorkshire miners of the Notts coalfield during the strike and condemning the class violence of the miners — in effect equating it with the terror unleashed by the nationally organised police force. Now their deafening silence over the class war prisoners shows they have taken one more step and sacrificed yet one more principle for the sake of bourgeois respectability.

And comrades who think the *Morning Star* is better than the Euro/McLennan leadership, when it comes to the class war, that they are somehow the lesser of two evils, you comrades ought to ponder the failure of the paper and the faction that stands behind it to champion

the imprisoned miners and their supporters.

We would say that because the *Morning Star* is just as committed to the *British Road* and its parliamentary illusions as the Euros it too has been compelled to condemn miners' violence, and thus to be just as shamefully quiet when it comes to the class war prisoners. This should not only give you comrades food for thought but if you are genuine communists you should break with that rotten grouping before the momentum of its liquidationism and the poison of its reformism land you up in the Labourite swamp.

In the 1920s there could be no question of the CPGB remaining silent about class war prisoners. Indeed, so feared by the state was our Party that on more than one occasion leading members found themselves sentenced to terms of imprisonment. How this contrasts with the tragic situation that prevails in 1985! Not only of course doesn't the bourgeois state find it necessary to arrest our leadership as a result of their role during the miners' Great Strike but those who were arrested in this monumental class battle find themselves deserted by the opportunists.

The reason for the 1920s CPGB's

principled position is as simple as the reason for the 1980s CPGB's lack of principle. In the 1920s the CPGB was a genuinely revolutionary Party; today it is suffering from senile rightism.

In the 1920s there could be no question of calling for sentences to be reduced, as has been the case over Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland. No, far from acquiescing to them serving sentences for manslaughter, as in reality such calls end up doing, the CPGB of the 1920s refused to recognise the legitimacy of the bourgeois law. This could only but result in them demanding the immediate release of all class war prisoners.

There must be no ground given on this principle by the workers' movement. It's not a question of "justice" within the parameters of bourgeois law but a class justice which demands the immediate and unconditional release of all class war prisoners. And the way to get this isn't appealing to parliamentary select committees or the supposed finer sentiments of the Prime Minister. No, the way to free our imprisoned brothers is mass working class action, the likes of which freed the Pentonville Five.

Jack Conrad

Lessons of the 1920s



THE International Class War Prisoners' Aid (British Section) came into existence in December 1924. It was fully backed by the Communist Party and its secretary was the well known leading communist Wal Hannington.

One of its most active campaigns was that in defence of the American anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, who were eventually executed. The ICWPA rallied mass support demanding their release.

The freedom of the prisoners of British imperialism especially those fighting for the liberation of India and Ireland was of particular concern for the ICWPA. Under its auspices Jim Larkin the great leader of the Dublin proletariat spoke alongside the CPGB MP Shapurji Saklatvala and other Party leaders to meetings up and down the country. As a result Saklatvala was able to present parliament with a petition demanding the release of all class war prisoners which contained 300,000 signatures.

In October 1925 12 leading CPGB members, including J.R. Campbell, Willie Gallacher, Albert Inkpin, Harry Pollitt, Bill Rust, R. Page Arnot, and Wal Hannington, were arrested. The 12 were charged with incitement to mutiny because the CPGB had called upon "all soldiers, sailors, and airmen to refuse under any circumstances to shoot down the workers of Britain."

And within a few weeks of the imprisonment of the 12, another directly political trial commenced in Cardiff. 167 anthracite miners were charged with offences resulting from their militant strike in July and August 1925.

It was clear that the ruling class was determined in the run up to the General Strike to decapitate the working class of its best leaders. The ICWPA launched a massive campaign in solidarity with the 12 and the miners.

Conferences were organised throughout the country. Weekly

marches of up to 15,000 descended on Wandsworth Prison where the 12 were held to demand their freedom. And when finally seven of the 12 communist prisoners were due for release, 20,000 rallied outside the jail to greet them and demand the immediate release of the remaining five.

Today, with around 70 militant miners and their supporters languishing in jail along with hundreds of brave Irish freedom fighters, a new ICWPA is a desperate necessity. True, the National Organisation of Miners in Prison and Supporters has been established by Martin Walker, an ex-Guardian journalist, and Jackie Kaye, an ex-friend of the RCG. But unfortunately NOMPAS seems to be regarded as their personal property, all political groups being told not to trespass. Such sectarianism is a caricature of the ICWPA and can only be damaging to the cause of the class war prisoners.

Leninists unconditionally defend the democratic struggle of the Irish republicans but we also see the need for working class leadership if victory is to be won.

Problems of success

WHILE it is true that Sinn Fein stands in fierce opposition to British imperialism and supports the guerrilla campaign against the British state, its class basis, programme, and outlook make it impossible for it to achieve a decisive victory. Because Sinn Fein aims for a united capitalist Ireland it is unable to pursue a consistent revolutionary strategy.

Sinn Fein has just achieved a major success in getting 59 candidates elected to local councils in the Six Counties. But this hasn't just caused problems in the Loyalist camp. The republican movement itself is experiencing serious problems because of the success of Sinn Fein.

Four top IRA cadres in Belfast, two of them former Belfast commanders, have recently been expelled by a narrow vote on the eight man IRA Executive. The leading figure amongst the dissidents is Ivor Bell, who was expelled because he openly expressed "no confidence" in Gerry Adams and called for an IRA Convention to reassess the Adams "electoral strategy".

According to reports in the *Irish Times* and the *Sunday Times* the expelled activists have been threatened with death if they continue to agitate amongst the ranks of the IRA, if they form a breakaway, or if they join forces with the Irish National Liberation Army which has in recent years rivalled the IRA in its attacks on the occupation forces. But it is said that the four have refused to cease their agitation; what is more, it is clear that they are not isolated.

Not only was the vote to expel them narrow but veterans of the movement like David O'Connell, former IRA chief of staff, Joe Cahill, Seamus Twomey, and Jimmy Drumm, who helped to found the Provisionals, have expressed their sympathy. What Bell and the old leaders who have been pushed into the background or ousted by the rise of Adams fear is a repetition of the drift into respectability and accommodation with the continuation of British occupation.

The last time this happened to the republican movement was in the 1960s. It eventually led to those who opposed the growing reformism of the movement to split in 1969/70 and form the Provisionals. But as well as this fear there are other undercurrents including objections to the dropping of the aim of a federated Ireland (which would include a nine-county Ulster) from Sinn Fein's constitution. So as well as contradictions expressing themselves on what emphasis to place on the ballot box as compared with the Armalite there is also a more shadowy contradiction between the traditionalists in the movement and the radicals around Adams.

It's not that the dissidents object to politics as such but what they want to ensure is that the military campaign against the forces of British imperialism is not subordinated to considerations of electoral popularity. Sinn Fein's contesting of elections in the midst of the H-Block hunger strike, the victory of Bobby Sands, while being undoubtedly successful, has led to not only more victories but the abandonment of the policy of abstentionism, first when it came to



elections for the EEC and now local councils. This has gone hand in hand with a growing pressure on the IRA not to engage in actions which could possibly spoil Sinn Fein's chances at the polls. 'Where will the rot stop?', ask the traditionalists.

Adams responds to the attacks on his leadership by promising to maintain the present balance between armed force and electoral activity. But his opponents don't trust him. They think the

movement is on a slippery slope towards subordinating the military campaign entirely to electoral considerations.

While this dispute seems to revolve around similar issues as the one between the Officials and the Provisionals, in reality it goes to the very heart of the republican tradition. Because it has historically been dominated by the petty bourgeoisie the republican movement has constantly oscillated

between reformism and guerrillaism.

The politics of the petty bourgeoisie has never been able to resolve the problem of combining the physical fight against British imperialism on the one hand and the winning of mass support on the other. Either pure physical force or pure reformism triumph. Attempts by the movement to create an equilibrium between the two have always proved unstable and

therefore temporary.

This contradiction manifested itself in the pure physical force approach of the Fenians as well as the pure reformism of the Land League of James Stewart Parnell. The twentieth century has likewise seen the republican movement swing from one approach to the other. When the guerrilla struggles of the IRA were crushed in 1923 Sinn Fein spawned the reformist nationalism of de Valera. In the same way after the failure of the 1956-62 Border Campaign Sinn Fein itself slowly slipped into reformism, something only upset by the outbreak of the 'Troubles' in 1969 which split the organisation in two.

While there are many in the workers' movement in Britain who paint the present Sinn Fein leadership in socialistic colours the fact is that Adams and his comrades remain first and foremost nationalists. Faced with the might of the British state the IRA has only managed to conduct in real terms a relatively low level guerrilla campaign. And although this has included the occasional spectacular attack, by and large the British Army has managed to contain the armed struggle to what its masters in Whitehall consider "acceptable limits".

It is this block that forced Adams to look to electoral tactics as a way to advance the republican cause. But despite achieving some sweeping successes this has necessitated steps towards reformism.

Of course, a Marxist-Leninist party would find little difficulty in reconciling the use of different tactics, including the apparently opposed tactics of armed struggle and standing in elections. Such a flexible approach was exemplified by Lenin's Bolshevik Party which not only switched from one tactic to another with infinite flexibility but was able to skilfully combine them.

Paul Mallory

Censorship

THE BANNING of the motion on Ireland submitted by comrade Malcolm Bride to this year's PPPS AGM exposes the internationalist and even the democratic pretensions of the Management Committee crew.

The motion read as follows:

"Ireland is Britain's oldest colony, its people have been British imperialism's most tenacious enemy; because of this Ireland is an acid test of internationalism for the progressive movement in Britain. With this in mind it is essential that the *Morning Star* makes the struggle for Irish freedom and national unity a major question in its news items and features.

"The coverage of Ireland has so far been inadequate and, what is more, been lacking in the spirit of internationalism. The reporting of Chris Myant has in particular been a disgrace. He has rabidly attacked the IRA every time it has engaged in an armed action and has taken a consistently hostile stance when writing about Sinn Fein or the IRSP. This must change. The *Morning Star* should take a sympathetic attitude towards the republican

movement.

"To facilitate this the AGM instructs the Management Committee to ensure that:

"1. Coverage of Ireland in the *Morning Star* is dramatically increased including giving space for the republican movement, especially Sinn Fein and the IRSP, to present their case.

"2. The *Morning Star* must immediately stop calling the Six Counties 'Ulster'.

"3. The *Morning Star* must initiate and support campaigns in support of republican prisoners. It must back their justified demand for political status and give full publicity to their barbaric treatment by British imperialism."

Censorship, the use of procedural formalities, has everything in common with the approach of bureaucrats, narrow minded pedants, and those who hide their national chauvinism with a veneer of "broad labour movement" humbug.

Those who take their political line from the anti-imperialist and pro-Irish republican movement tradition of Karl Marx and

4th Anniversary of the death of Comrade Bobby Sands MP

ROLL OF HONOUR

10 H-block Martyrs

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------|
| Bobby Sands | May 5th | 66 days |
| Francis Hughes | May 12th | 59 days |
| Raymond McCreesh | May 21st | 61 days |
| Patsy O'Hara | May 21st | 61 days |
| Joe McDonnell | July 8th | 61 days |
| Martin Hurson | July 13th | 46 days |
| Kevin Lynch | Aug. 1st | 71 days |
| Kieran Doherty | Aug. 2nd | 73 days |
| Thomas McElwee | Aug. 8th | 62 days |
| Micky Devine | Aug. 20th | 60 days |

I used to think the separation of Ireland from England impossible. I now think it inevitable. Karl Marx

Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence in any one generation of Irishmen, of even a respectable minority, ready to die to affirm that truth, makes that Government for ever a usurpation and a crime against human progress.

I personally thank God that I have lived to see the day when thousands of Irish men and boys, and hundreds of Irish women and girls, were ready to affirm that truth, and to attest it with their lives if need be.

James Connolly

Organised and paid for by individual members of the Communist Party and others.

Morning Star advert on May 4 paid for by pro-republican CP members.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin will condemn the Management Committee. But what about those Communist Party members — certainly those amongst them who follow the *Morning Star* — who clubbed together to pay for an advert on May 4 to commemorate

the fourth anniversary of the death of Bobby Sands and the nine other H-Block martyrs?

Will they join with us in exposing the hypocrisy of comrade Chater's internationalism? Will they break from this objectively pro-British imperialist grouping?

THE LENINIST

SUPPLEMENT

The Third Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB DEBATES, RESOLUTIONS AND SUBSEQUENT DECISIONS

MANY members of our Communist Party decry the present open struggle that is taking place in our Party. They declare that we should not wash our dirty linen in public. We Leninists on the other hand fully welcome open struggle for it allows all Party members to come to a comprehensive understanding of the issues being debated, and what goes for Party members also goes for militant workers outside our ranks.

And what we apply to the Party we also apply to the Leninist tendency in it. Far from seeking to conceal differences that arise in our ranks we seek to give them the fullest possible publicity so that the best elements in our Party and class can first judge the issues being debated and then join us in the struggle to reforge the CPGB, fully conscious of all the arguments, shades, and tendencies in the Party.

The Third Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB met in June to debate and vote upon four main motions submitted by various comrades. The reader will see from our standing orders that our conference was in terms of democracy far freer than anything even suggested by the so-called revolutionary democrats (i.e. the Eurocommunists) in our Party, let alone the Chaterites with their gerrymandered PPPS AGMs and their stage managed conferences, where only hand picked speakers are allowed the floor.

True, those at our conference were not democratically elected, but all efforts were made to ensure that the conference was as representative as possible. But despite the incompleteness of our democracy there can be no doubt that we organised a model communist conference, where comrades were given the maximum opportunity to state their case and to submit amendments to the motions.

Comrades attending the conference ranged in ages from one comrade still in the teens to another in the 70s. They combined between them many decades of experience in the communist movement. Some were amongst those who founded the Leninist tendency while others had joined us within the last year. Comrades were extremely pleased, and indeed honoured, by the presence of a delegation from the Communist Party of Turkey (*İşçinin Sesi*) which had been appointed by the newly elected Central Committee of that organisation. Out of the delegation of four comrades from the CPT(*İS*), two had only just recently been released from prison in Turkey. As will be seen from our standing orders, the delegation was granted full rights at the conference, except of course voting rights.

Standing Orders

1. The minutes of the Third Conference will be confirmed by those participating by their signature of the completed record.
2. All proposals and motions, apart from those relating to procedure, shall be submitted to the chair in writing.
3. Each speaker, except those introducing motions and reports, will be limited to ten (10) minutes. No speaker will be permitted to speak more than three (3) times on the same subject; however, this provision may be modified with the consent of the conference.

4. On procedural motions there shall be no more than two (2) speakers each 'for' and 'against'.
5. All decisions shall be by simple majority vote.
6. Notwithstanding preparations to conference which may lay down a deadline for amendments to motions in order to expedite matters, participants shall have the right to submit amendments during conference.
7. Fraternal delegates to the conference shall have the same rights as all others attending, except the right to vote.

Report of Work

The conference was opened by the conference chair, comrade MT. The first introduction was given by comrade CJ who gave the report of work. This report touched on the development of the Leninist tendency from when we first published a theoretical journal back in November 1981 to the decision to launch a monthly paper taken at our First Conference. But the main thrust of the report was the performance of Leninists during and after the miners' Great Strike.

In the period of the Great Strike our circulation more than doubled and our subscribers tripled. Even more importantly our tendency secured some extremely valuable contacts in the mining communities as well as winning wide respect for our activity and political positions from forces in the Miners' Support Committees.

The other great concern for the Leninists was naturally the profound crisis gripping our CPGB. Comrade CJ reported the impact of the ideas contained in *The Leninist* on the Party and went into details about our efforts to prevent the crisis shattering the Party completely. A *National Bulletin* had been launched which circulates to all shades in the Party as well as our own supporters and sympathisers.

The Class Struggle debate

The first motion to be debated was submitted by comrade FP. In general it proved an uncontroversial question in the main because it covered ground by and large fully discussed by supporters of *The Leninist*. Despite this there was some debate caused by the narrowness of the motion. Therefore as well as amendments being submitted to emphasise the dialectical relationship between the rise in the class struggle and the need for a reformed CPGB there was also an amendment which attempted to broaden the final resolution by at least touching upon developments in the bourgeoisie itself. These amendments plus some of perhaps less importance were accepted by the mover and by the conference as a whole.

Differences did emerge however over an amendment submitted by comrade CS which stated that "we must look to groups outside the sphere of trade unionism". While conference sympathised with the sentiment of this and other similar amendments it was felt that they missed the point. A number of comrades argued that what was central for Leninists was not narrow trade union politics and that the motion before conference with the agreed amendments did

not fall into this trap.

So while some sympathy was expressed for the amendments submitted by comrade CS it was unanimously agreed to reject them.

Resolution on the class struggle

The miners' strike was a harbinger of the things to come in the British class struggle. The carefully nurtured image of the state as neutral and above class interest has been shattered and its partisan nature exposed in the eyes of many workers. The scenes on the picket lines were reminiscent of the battles in the occupied Six Counties of Northern Ireland and the heat and tempo of the struggle were such that in the course of it the embryos of future working class state power were briefly thrown up:

*In the hit squads we saw fledgling workers' militias, bodies which will one day defend socialised property forms.

*In Women Against Pit Closures we saw the stirrings of a mass working class women's movement, a movement awakened to the class struggle and which fights on the basis of unity of interest between working class men and woman

*In the Miners' Support Committees and some strike committees we saw the future organs of working class state power: Councils of Action and soviets.

The miners' strike was thus the first major strategic confrontation between the capitalist class and a section of the working class during the Thatcher administration. Although the working class has been forced to take steps back because of defeat after defeat of the unions, the bourgeoisie hoped with the miners' strike to inflict a strategic defeat which would have emphatically swung the balance of class forces in Britain to the ruling class.

This, however, has not happened. The miners' union remains intact and important elements of it still combative. Also, the continuing industrial unrest involving other sections and the stirrings amongst working class youth illustrate the fact that demoralisation and a puncturing of the willingness to fight has not permeated our class in the way the bourgeoisie wished. The miners stand bloodied but unbowed and our class's fighting capacity on the whole remains intact.

For the ruling class, therefore, the outcome of the miners' strike was not altogether satisfactory. It has come out of its confrontation with the miners without the decisive victory for which it worked, without 'seeing the miners off' as Thatcher proclaimed; and with advanced sections of the class certainly not demoralised but confused and uncertain and searching for means to reopen the battle.

The capitalist class is facing an approaching general crisis, and all its sections are attempting to adapt to the changing situation. We see the breakaways from the Thatcherite camp, the increased publicity for the so-called social democrats (traitors even to the reformists), the increasing confidence of the Healey-Hattersley group and of the Kinnock-Hobsbawm new Fabian realists of the Labour Party, and for that matter the developments in the CPGB.

The maintenance of profit levels and wage

levels are now diametrically opposed: a rise in one necessitates a decline in the other. The reassertion of the tendency for the rate of profit to fall and British imperialism's relative vulnerability means that the crisis cannot be solved by expanding abroad. The British ruling class must crack down on and is cracking down on the living standards and conditions of the workers at home. Whatever the outcome of the miners' strike had been, the bourgeoisie could not have rested on its laurels, but it now still faces a working class that has not had the fight crushed out of it.

Thus, despite the defeat of the miners, the coming period will see an intensification of the class struggle, with one sector after another thrown into conflict. The sharpening of the class struggle, epitomised by the miners' strike, has put to the test all shades of politics in the workers' movement. Reformism, even in its most left variety, has been exposed as deception and betrayal of the working class. Objectively what must be fought for in order to give our class victory against the bourgeois onslaught is communist leadership in the trade unions and in the workplaces.

The main plank of a communist leadership in the trade unions and in the workplaces must be to break the poisonous identification of workers' interests with the solvency of British capitalism that the years of social peace and the domination of the workers' movement by reformism has meant. The main slogan for a communist current of the working masses must be: 'Fight for what the working class needs, not what capitalism can afford!'

In the absence of a communist leadership of the trade unions we must look to the rebirth of a National Minority-type body. Success in building such an organisation would undoubtedly represent a qualitative step forward in the working class movement of Britain and would inevitably create much of the raw material required to reforge our Communist Party. A new National Minority Movement would not only greatly aid the immediate struggle of the working class, giving militancy an organised national expression (across sectional and geographical divides), but lay some of the foundation stones in winning workers to revolutionary politics.

The class struggle in Britain in the coming period will necessarily assume a political character. With the development of state monopoly capitalism workers frequently confront the state as a negotiator and employer. Similarly, the anti-trade union laws introduced by the Tories represent not simply an attempt to curb the bargaining power of the unions as with previous legislation; it represents an attempt of the bourgeoisie to effectively cripple trade unionism in Britain. This, combined with the increasingly open deployment of the expanded state apparatus of oppression will lead workers to become more and more aware of the non-neutral, partisan nature of the capitalist state.

However, although the class struggle will be impelled increasingly to take on an political content, subjective factors will determine the character of the political consciousness of workers. That is, whether

workers' consciousness will become revolutionary or will remain simply militantly reformist and economist, pursuing narrow trade union issues, will be determined by the ability of communists to intervene in the class struggle to give leadership.

During the coming period, revolutionary politics have the chance to go to the heart of the working class movement. In view of this, the Leninist tendency of the Communist Party of Great Britain must strive to go from a proletarian tendency in philosophical terms to one based directly on advanced proletarian elements.

To do this we must, first, deepen and make more profound our theoretical understanding of the character of the present epoch and, second, intervene in a sharp and practical way to give communist leadership to the coming class battles.

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The Soviet Union Question

Although this motion presented by comrade CJ was deliberately designed to be uncontroversial an interesting discussion took place on the motion.

Comrade CJ dealt with what was *not* meant by the Soviet Union being the world's revolutionary centre. "It does not mean that the comrades in the Kremlin were 'directing' the world revolution as some Trotskyites foolishly believe us to mean. Nor did it mean that everything the Communist Party of the Soviet Union does is automatically correct as most centrists in Britain consider it does. No, for us the world revolutionary centre is an objective fact indicating the country where the class struggle has reached its highest expression."

Because of this a scientific understanding of the Soviet Union was an essential question for all serious revolutionaries — a task to be taken on not "simply because the Soviet Union is there" — but "because of the immense impact and importance of the Soviet Union has on world politics." It was, declared comrade CJ, "a task the Leninists would be taking on because of developments in the communist movement in Britain", it would by no means "win us friends" in the short term, but was necessary in order to strengthen the struggle to reforge our CPGB.

"Above all life puts this task in front of us," said the comrade. The announcement of the CPSU's 27th Congress demands we prepare our comments for a number of reasons. While the USSR is making tremendous progress compared with the crisis ridden imperialist world it cannot be denied that the country has growing economic and social problems, "these have been extensively dealt with by comrade Gorbachev, and no sophistry by centrists like comrade Andrew Rothstein can conceal them."

Participants discussed the implications and the correct timing of articles on the Soviet Union question; and while comrade CS thought these articles should be very wide ranging, encompassing not only the USSR but the other socialist countries including China along with general developments in the world communist movement, it was agreed that concentrating specifically on the deliberations of the CPSU at its 27th Congress and the new programme would have great advantages.

Comrade TW emphasised that while it was important to analyse the Soviet Union it was vital to pay full attention to the achievements. It was agreed that although the motion presented to our Third Conference did not need this, it was essential in forthcoming articles to present a balanced picture of the achievements of the USSR along with standing full square with unconditional defence of the USSR against imperialism.

The resolution on the Soviet Union

1. The Soviet Union is the world's revolutionary centre. In other words: the Soviet Union is the country where the class struggle has reached the highest level. This is an objective fact independent of the subjective views and wishes of the working class in that country, and this includes its leadership be it good, bad, or indifferent.

2. We Leninists describe the Soviet Union as the world's revolutionary centre not because of the policies of the CPSU, whatever they may be, or whether it be under the leadership of Lenin, Stalin, Kruschev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, or Gorbachev. In the same way, whatever the leadership and our view of it we consider it

our sacred duty to defend the USSR against imperialism unconditionally because it is the first and most important socialist state: the greatest achievement and most precious possession of the world's proletariat.

3. Because the Soviet Union is the world's revolutionary centre, because it is the world's first and most important socialist state, it is unquestionably the case that the CPSU enjoys both immense respect and enormous influence from, and over, advanced workers throughout the world.

4. We have seen that this has had outstandingly positive results. We can never forget for one moment the role of our Soviet comrades in the formation of our CPGB, the highest achievement of Britain's working class to date. We can also never forget the Red Army's victory over the forces of German imperialism and how this directly opened up the possibility of spreading socialism into Eastern Europe. In the same light we are acutely aware of the tremendous sacrifices of the Soviet people in defending their country and their allies in the Warsaw Pact against the US-led anti-Soviet war drive, a war drive which is aimed at conquering the socialist countries and their colonial subjugation so that they can be opened up to capitalist exploitation.

5. Our unconditional defence of the USSR does not of course mean that we do not have differences with our comrades in the CPSU; indeed we have on several occasions had important criticisms and have voiced them openly. This is in our view a Leninist duty and fully within the founding principles of our world communist movement and proletarian internationalism. We have made our concern known therefore over Afghanistan: not the Red Army's aid in fighting the forces of counterrevolution but the branding of Hafizullah Amin as a "CIA agent" and justifying his killing along with 97 other leaders of the PDPA. We have, what is more, criticised the role of Joseph Stalin in opening the door for centrism and opportunism in our world movement, not least his promotion and effusive approval of the thoroughly reformist BRS. Such actions have been extremely negative, although we accept that they were motivated by an honest desire to defend the USSR. Unfortunately, we believe such actions shortsighted indeed; we have stated that they in truth damage the longterm interests of the USSR, which we consider can only be advanced by the fight for world revolution.

6. Because of these contradictory features manifested by the USSR, because the CPSU is the most prestigious and leading component of the world communist movement, it is essential that we move towards a fuller understanding of the USSR, both in its internal structures and dynamics as well as its historical role and achievements. In this we will be guided by the teachings of Marxism-Leninism and motivated by an earnest desire to strengthen the USSR and the world socialist system.

7. The CPSU is to have its 27th Congress in February 1986; it is also to decide on its Fourth Programme. This is therefore a major event for both communists in the USSR and the world as a whole. We should take up the CPSU's numerous and correct invitations for all communists to comment on their deliberations and decisions. We trust that our Soviet comrades will take our observations in the spirit in which they are delivered: the spirit of proletarian internationalism, which considers the world revolutionary process to be indivisible.

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Debate around the motion on the Party Crisis and the Way Forward Towards a Leninist Communist Party

As the reader will have seen, the first half of our conference proved to be relatively uneventful. This was not the case with the second half.

At the end of the second session in a private conversation comrade ID announced that he was leaving our organisation because of disagreement with our style of work. The comrade maintained that while thinking it was correct to launch *The Leninist* as a monthly paper, and while having no political differences with us, our style of work was incorrect.

Because comrade ID was a leading member of our tendency and because another leading comrade, comrade RT, had openly expressed sympathy with comrade

ID's views (although making abundantly clear thorough disapproval of comrade ID's desertion, and especially the unwillingness to raise criticisms which apparently went back to our First Conference) the third session began with a certain foreboding and perhaps a recognition of the need to have a full sorting out of the issue.

The motion was presented by comrade ES. The comrade outlined how it is the crisis of capitalism itself that propels opportunism in all its varieties towards liquidationism. This manifested itself in the miners' strike in a particularly sharp form. The likes of comrade Pete Carter have openly and unashamedly come out against working class militancy in general and working class violence in particular.

As to the opposition forces around the *Morning Star* and *Straight Left*, far from being the "lesser of two evils" they are going towards liquidationism but through different doors. Indeed, the *Morning Star* grouping is fast moving away from communist politics and towards integration with the trade union and labour bureaucracy.

The comrade examined claims from various centrists that the *Morning Star* can become Britain's *Iskra*. The politics of Lenin's *Iskra* and Chater's *Morning Star* are like chalk and cheese, 'they are miles apart', the difference being between 'reform and revolution'. There is not a cat in hell's chance that the reformist *Morning Star* can usher in a mass revolutionary party.

"Because of this it is essential," declared comrade ES, "to expose the left pretensions of the Chaterite camp" as well as those of the Straight Leftists "who have not only constantly vacillated between the Chaterites and the forces around comrade McLennan but have employed the most despicable and contemptible tactics."

The comrade went on to outline how it was only the Leninists who had both a scientific understanding of the Party crisis and a strategy of positively resolving it. At the heart of this strategy was the "necessity of open ideological struggle" through which the Leninists could win the "best elements of the working class to our Party". The main weapon in achieving this is *The Leninist* itself. "Without the paper," declared comrade ES, "we're nothing".

So the development of the paper, its ideas, its direction, and the expansion of its circulation and influence were among the "most important questions" confronting us. And central to this was "moving towards a professional approach and the overcoming of amateurism." The comrade emphasised that "revolution was a serious business" and like any serious job of work "revolutionaries need both training and dedication".

At this point comrades ES turned to the differences that had been expressed and not expressed about our organisational approach. "Passing fine resolutions is all very well," the comrade said, "but practice decides everything in the end." The comrade described how a leading member of our organisation had not seen fit to reveal important differences on the leading committee of our tendency or even at the conference itself, comrade ES then went on to deal with the points put forward by that comrade privately and similar views defended by comrade RT.

"The suggestion has been made that we have copied too closely the methods of work of the comrades from Turkey in *İşçinin Ses*" explained the comrade, "this is untrue". Yes, the Leninists in Britain have sought to "learn from the experience of Turkey," because of this "it has been possible, for our relatively small numbers to produce a monthly paper;" but this is not a question of being "un-British" but a question of "taking the revolutionary struggle forward." "The labour movement in Britain," said comrade ES, "has no idea of how to operate serious revolutionary politics — this is something we must overcome".

The comrade described how it was that perhaps certain comrades who had been in our organisation for some time found it the hardest to adapt to the new more demanding ways, how newer comrades had quickly fitted into our style of work. Above all the comrade declared that "if anything serious was to be achieved, if *The Leninist* was to be more than a footnote in the history of the reforgering of the CPGB, then maximum effort was required along with a professional approach." This concluded the comrade's opening and then from the floor the first contributor was comrade RT.

Comrade RT declared that comrade ID

"should have argued" the case but then went on to "share some of the same doubts" while "agreeing on the basic approach in terms of strategy and aims" of the Leninists. For comrade RT the "key question is how are we to achieve a Leninist Communist Party ... despite progress we have had very few recruits, and although *The Leninist* is a good paper and has respect from militant workers, this is not enough."

The comrade maintained that the Leninist tendency was only those gathered for the conference and that winning militant miners was the "test" of our work. Comrade RT also maintained that we could not convert sympathisers into supporters simply through a "hothouse atmosphere" as it was suggested the motion presented to the conference did. "Militant workers had to be ideologically convinced and to do this they needed guidance in where they worked in the movement."

Unless amendments to the motion were accepted which deleted the "demand" for hard work and money along with all ideas of a "hothouse" the comrade feared that the Leninist tendency would deviate from the correct direction. The comrade also submitted an amendment to the motion on Turkey outlining a similar position. It read as follows: "we must not mechanically try to imitate every pattern of organisational and political work used by our comrades from Turkey. We recognise an important difference between Turkey and Britain in that the former has recently experienced a revolutionary situation whereas such conditions have not existed here for a very long time and are highly unlikely to arise in the near future."

The first comrade to reply to comrade RT was comrade FP. This comrade stated that certain comrades were not "measuring up to the tasks presented to us". Comrade CJ agreed and made the point that it was essential to differentiate between "leading comrades and those who have just come towards us". The comrade also declared that the Leninists were far more than those gathered at the conference; the tendency now had an important layer of sympathisers and a growing readership. Comrade CJ went on to say that what Leninists are after is a Communist Party to carry out a revolution in Britain; to do this "we had to do more than build a better CPGB", we had to build a "Leninist CPGB along Bolshevik lines." If leading comrades "can't take the pace," the comrade stated, "they should step down;" the motion before the conference was not a blueprint for a Bolshevik Party in Britain but at least it was a step in that direction, which was more than could be said of comrade RT's amendments.

Comrade RT replied reiterating the point that "we are in Britain, not Turkey" and that what mattered "was practical work" as well as theory. "A member of our leading committee leaving says something serious," the comrade said, and Leninism will not grow in Britain in a "hothouse atmosphere"; the amendments were not an attempt to gut the motion but point it in the correct direction.

The debate then continued with comrade FP intervening again. Comrade FP described the amendments of comrade RT as "holding back the fight to advance" and suggested the deflection of comrade ID was "telling us something about the period we are living through." While comrade TW agreed that "every demand that needs to be made on comrades must be made," the "solution to the work problem was more people." Comrade CS was more forthright "we have to work at the level that corresponds to our aspirations — there must be no steps back organisationally," and comrade WP also joined in the attack on comrade RT's position saying the amendments suffered from a "subjective view". Conference then heard the speech from a member of the CPT (*IS*) delegation:

"Comrades;
We are here to convey the greetings of the CPT (*IS*). We are here as a delegation chosen by our Central Committee.

As you know, comrades, we have recently held our 5th Congress; of course it was also in a sense the first, as it saw the formation of *İşçinin Ses* (*Worker's Voice*) into a party.

One of the great features of the congress was that it was possible to have the participation of many comrades who were in jail until recently. Two of those were leading members of our Party who are with our delegation today.

I would like to say a few words about your Third Conference. It has been convened under circumstances of deepening crisis in

Great Britain. This crisis certainly reflects itself in the intensification of the class struggle in the country as a whole. It also perhaps in one sense reflects itself in the debates you are having at your conference, simply because there is a great need for practical work, work which life itself demands, which the objective developments in the class struggle demand.

Those who put themselves forward to meet these developments must increase their preparedness, their means, and their abilities, if they are to meet the tasks life is demanding.

At this juncture of the class struggle in Great Britain communists who are resolute, dedicated, stubborn, and totally committed can play a great role. There can be no ground given, not even a millimetre, on the question of hard work — whatever you give it will not be enough, life will demand more.

The working class in Great Britain needs a revolutionary organisation. Today the CPGB has great problems stemming from ideological mistakes and its political stance. One would initially think that it would be risky to give support to such a Party which is undoubtedly disintegrating.

But assume for one moment that it totally disintegrates tomorrow. If the alternative is not ready to take over, this disintegration will leave the working class without a Communist Party. Therefore despite the risks it must be supported.

This is the position of the CPT (IS) at this juncture. This support is especially necessary when one recognises that one of the most important agents in the disintegration of the CPGB today is the central organ of the Party. This is something totally unacceptable. It is rebelling, fighting for its independence from that Party, using every possible bourgeois legal pretext, using bourgeois political forces like the Labour Party as a cover.

It is a situation therefore where indifference might mean tacit approval of the *Morning Star* defying the Party centre. This could lead to an incorrect ideological position. The working class needs the authority of a highly centralised party and the centralisation of the work of individual communists. Such a thing cannot be brought about by the present course of the *Morning Star*.

We attach great importance to the work of *The Leninist*. Throughout our stay in Great Britain in its various stages and between various comrades relations between our two organisations have been extremely valuable, extremely exemplary. This has the seeds of what proletarian internationalism should be like.

There cannot be any question of mechanical copying our work of *İşçinin Sesi* in Turkey. This is not required by life and no one can defend such a suggestion. Certainly there is a lot we have learnt from each other and that is in itself an important aspect of proletarian internationalism.

As to Turkey itself, today it is important to note the changing situation and the retardedness of other left wing organisations. When we said there was a revolutionary situation they did not accept it. They compounded their mistakes to such an extent that when we had the uprisings in Izmir and Çorum they had to deny that there was a revolutionary situation.

The most pressing task in those days was to show the working class that there was a revolutionary situation. Today it is in many ways exactly the same.

Today we must show to the working class that fascism has disintegrated. Just as before when there were uprisings and they said there was no revolutionary situation, that there was nothing special going on, today we see the same forces engage in the same caricature of politics.

They say there is still fascism. And yet there are strikes, mass demonstrations, and the bourgeois opposition forces are vying with each other for popular support. Such a situation makes it easier to expose the retardedness of the other left groupings.

There can be no doubt that what is becoming crucial for our working class is the leadership of a communist organisation. So we have a great deal of work to do. In this light we are in great need of the proletarian internationalist stand that has been the cement of our relations to continue in the near future with increased strength, increased closeness in order to meet the tasks confronting us."

Comrade RT again replied that there was no "disagreement on aims, but how to get there;" the comrade returned to the desertion of

comrade ID, declaring that "when comrades break from us, especially a leading comrade, it tells us something about our organisation." The comrade also reemphasised the point that there "was not a revolutionary situation in Britain" and that we cannot win people "simply through hard work."

The conference gave comrade CJ an extension of time in order to reply fully to the case presented by comrade RT. "The amendments are purely negative," stated the comrade, and moreover they "indicated a step away from building a Bolshevik type organisation and pointed towards Menshevik looseness."

Because of this there could be "no compromise" with the amendments. On the desertion of comrade ID, delegates were reminded that the comrade "never raised differences" even though as a leading comrade there was "a duty to do so". The comrade went on to explain that if it was correct to produce *The Leninist* as a monthly paper the style of work inevitably followed and served that decision. The suggestion that the Leninist tendency had problems because of the desertion of one comrade, albeit a leading one, was attacked as was the notion that we should somehow be recruiting hand over fist.

As to the idea that Leninists in Britain were mechanically copying the methods of work employed in Turkey this was "nonsense". Because of the conditions prevailing in Britain "we don't work in a way anything like the comrades in Turkey," the comrade maintained. But the comrade went on to say that learning from the most advanced experience available was a different matter. The comrade turned to the formation of the CPGB itself explaining how the inspiration of the Russian Bolsheviks had proved crucial in its formation; yes, there were undoubtedly "some mechanical aspects" taken on board by the CPGB and "perhaps this was the case with us but this can only be overcome through us spreading our roots, digging them in the class struggle, not by amendments which in reality only reflect British backwardness."

Finally the comrade stated that the problems of the Leninists in Britain were ones of growth, the loss of comrade ID "is an indication of that comrade's problems not ours." The comrade appealed to the delegates to compare the situation faced by the tendency when it was formed and at the time of the conference; "who can doubt our progress," the "problems we have we've worked extremely hard to get".

This position was then supported by comrades CS and FP. Comrade CS declaring having been won by the high level of commitment demanded by the Leninists as well as its correct ideological position. Comrade FP attacked comrade ID for deserting and for not fighting for his position. The comrade described *The Leninist* as "a monthly miracle" which is "only possible with the level of commitment demanded at present" and in order to "go forward more must be demanded."

Comrade RT entered the debate again but admitted offering 'no alternative' but simply attempting to be practical. But others were not convinced by the comrade's arguments; comrades FP, TW, ES, WP, MT, BA, NS, and CJ all came in against them. As well as this, another comrade from the CPT (IS) intervened declaring that they too had "similar problems" on the question of work levels. But as well as this debate the comrade, like the first speaker from the CPT (IS), turned to the crisis in CPGB and argued that given the gathering disintegration of the Party there was "no room for abstentionism."

In the light of this argument it was agreed to vote on comrade RT's amendments and then to go on to deal with the whole *Morning Star* problem. Comrade ES summed up the arguments and called for a vote against the amendments which blunted the organisational cutting edge of the motion.

The resolution on the Party Crisis

Introduction

Given the nature of the class struggle in Britain today our Party, the Communist Party of Great Britain, in the hands of opportunists leaders is far removed from fulfilling its leading role. The Eurocommunists are trying to turn the CPGB into an appendage of the bourgeoisie, into a petty bourgeois party of reform. By pursuing a tailist, reformist political line, by trampling underfoot Leninist norms, and by employing

bureaucratic methods they are betraying the Party and the working class.

1. The Basis of the Party Crisis

To fully understand the Party crisis it is essential that we go back to its formation and developments from there on.

The CPGB was formed in the wake of the October Revolution and the establishment of the Third International. Its formation was and is the highest achievement of the working class movement in Britain. However, the fact that the CPGB was not formed as a result of rigorous and protracted ideological struggle meant that the Party was heavily dependent on Comintern and in particular the CPSU. This was not a problem while the Soviet Union was under the leadership of Lenin, but with the rise of Stalin the CPSU took steps away from Leninism towards centrism. Given the importance of external influences on the CPGB, it lost its anchorage in Leninism. As the CPSU downgraded its proletarian internationalism the CPGB was increasingly opened up to the pull of reformism.

The watershed in the degeneration of our Party was the seventh and final congress of Comintern in 1935. In pursuit of the Popular Front the CPGB put the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat under wraps and instead Party members were encouraged to gain respectability by integrating themselves into the labour bureaucracy and the reformist and largely pacifist 'anti-war' movement, and the anti-fascist movement. The CPSU, by encouraging this, by planting the seeds of centrism and then of class collaboration, also ironically planted the seeds of anti-Sovietism. These seeds were further nurtured by the dissolution of Comintern in 1943, which opened up the whole world communist movement to nationalistic centrifugal forces. It was only a matter of time before the CPGB crossed the Rubicon and condemned the Soviet Union: the occasion was Czechoslovakia 1968. It was at this time that the contradiction, between a leadership which firmly based loyalty to Britain above loyalty to the Soviet Union and the centrists who insisted that loyalty to the Soviet Union must come first, came to the surface.

2. The Present Crisis

The crisis in the CPGB has become liquidationist: particularly acute. What has precipitated this crisis is a basic contradiction between reform and revolution, a contradiction which is becoming ever more exacerbated because of the impact of British capitalism's drift into profound economic crisis and the clear signs that this is being fuelled by the emergence of a new general crisis of capitalism. This crisis has meant an end to the consensus politics of the 1950s and 1960s and consequently a crisis of reformism. The predictable relegation of the Labour Party back to a party of crisis means that the *British Road*'s step by Labour Party step to socialism stands exposed as an opportunist fantasy.

In response to this situation the Euro/McLennan leadership has moved even further to the right. Against the class war policies of the bourgeoisie epitomised by Thatcher it seeks to employ a Popular Front type 'anti-Thatcherite' alliance which will include Liberals, SDPers and anti-'Thatcherite' Tories. The logic of these polities is to distance the Party from the traditions of working class militancy and to totally break from the Soviet Union in an attempt to transform the Party into a neo-Fabian 'think tank of the left'. In other words to liquidate the Party.

These developments have deeply worried a section of the old Party machine as well as many CP trade union functionaries. But recently, with the dramatic organisational decline of the Party which threatens to drastically reduce its influence and throw many out of Party jobs, discontent has turned into open rebellion. The question of the *Morning Star* has become a central focus of this rebellion.

3. The Opposition

3.1. Straight Leftism

While the Straight Leftists are full of revolutionary rhetoric its actions, not least in the miners' strike, fly in the face of this rhetoric and expose their Labourite liquidationism. Moreover, in the Party struggle while adhering to a 'no split' line their only perspective for winning the Party is through a congress or by the divine intervention of the Soviet Union. This formalism has led them to meekly accept Euro diktat and 'scab' on other oppositionists.

3.2. Morning Star

Although this faction is fighting the Eurocommunists the question is on what principles? Comrade Chater, with his countless statements that he fully supports the reformist 1978 *BRS*, his centrist supporters' 'positive' interpretations of it, the perspective of saving the *Morning Star* through handing it over to a combination of 'entrepreneurial capitalism' and the trade union and labour bureaucracy, and the course away from communist politics epitomised by the statement that a CPGB was an 'outside body' show that the *Morning Star* grouping is both revisionist and liquidationist.

The orientation of this group means that the position increasingly put by some Chater followers, that is that it is important to secure the *Morning Star* rather than the Party because from the *Star* they can build a genuine Communist Party, is impossible. A Chater split carries with it the great danger of a split between the *Morning Star* and communist politics.

So while we defend these oppositionists against the bureaucratic actions of the Eurocommunists, because of their liquidationism we cannot even offer them our critical support over the *Morning Star*. However, the fact that the Party has been split wide open is all to be good because it means a period of ideological flux. This has been illustrated by the fact that elements on the fringes of the Chater camp have taken steps towards us and even Chater has used terms like bureaucratic centralism, a concept we have sought acceptance for consistently.

4. To Resolve the Crisis

The crisis cannot be positively resolved by decisions of the 39th Congress. This can only be done by a Leninist ideological struggle which draws in the best elements of our class. At the same time we must aim to split the best centrists from their misleaders. This can be done in part by concentrating our ideological 'firepower' on the following weak points in their positions.

— The *British Road to Socialism*

— The *Morning Star* as a basis of a Party. The comparison that some of those advocating this position have used is that of *Iskra*. We must counter this on the basis of which principles the *Morning Star* and *Iskra*.

— Thatcherism

— The AES

— Ireland

The Leninist realises that the success of our class relies not on winning a couple of thousand ex-centrists. What is vital is the ability of *The Leninist* to grow as a vanguard for the working class itself. This is why in our conditions open ideological struggle must assume a pivotal importance in our strategy. With it workers can come to understand the differences in the CPGB, what factions stand for what, and how their ideology and attitude relate to the class struggle. Thus workers can be won to the Party as fully conscious partisans of Leninism.

Our duty is to reforge the CPGB, our Party, as a Marxist-Leninist organisation able to carry out the revolution.

5. Building the Basis of a Leninist Communist Party

5.1 Today and for the immediate future *The Leninist* will remain small in numbers, relatively isolated from the working class, and indeed relatively peripheral in inner-Party debates. Part and parcel of building the basis for a Leninist CPGB is overcoming these features. In part this requires the maximisation of our resources as they now exist and their careful realistic development with a firm eye on the long term. Obviously all comrades have different talents, different abilities, but it is clear that we are not developing comrades as we should, nor are we developing comrades with a clear understanding of what is required for the future. This applies both to political education and practical skills; what is needed is a systematic cadre training programme.

5.2. Political education should take the form of:

5.2.1 Organised discussions on the content of *The Leninist*.

5.2.2 The encouraging of comrades to write for the paper, especially on questions that they are directly concerned with, though this should only be commenced after full discussion.

5.2.3 The holding of regular day schools and weekend schools.

5.3 Practical skills. We need comrades who can: defend themselves; handle basic

accounts; type; take photos and develop film; use a duplicator; understand the printing process and do rudimentary layout; drive a car; speak with confidence at public meetings; understand basic security measures; speak foreign languages. To develop these skills we must select comrades who can teach other comrades but we must aim for all comrades to be as rounded as possible.

5.4 While such developments enhance our resources we must also direct them carefully. A Leninist Communist Party means a Party in which each comrade's work is performed as part of a whole, where the present aims of the CPGB (4. Conditions of Membership; "...and work in a Party organisation") are strictly adhered to, and where the Leninist concept of the revolutionary party as one where its members are members of a basic unit, work actively in it, and under its direction.

5.4.1 Understanding that work for *The Leninist* should take priority over all other work.

5.4.2 Only taking on 'broad' responsibilities after discussion and a specific decision.

5.4.3 Dropping positions if required by the organisation.

5.4.4 Being prepared to live and work where it benefits our work.

5.5 Cadre development must be determined by our overall strategic perspective and main tactics. In short, these can be summed up as conducting an open ideological struggle from inside the CPGB, the most important party for communists in Britain, in order to win the best elements from the working class in our Party on an openly partisan, Leninist basis. This will also enable us to win the most honest and militant individuals from the centrist camp and indeed force this camp as a whole to the left as a prelude to splitting it and taking an important section over to Leninism. It must be emphasised that at present the key to this strategy is *The Leninist* itself, its circulation, the direction of its articles, and its organisation.

5.6 (Deleted for security reasons).

5.7 Today we can only see the potential of our strategy in embryonic form. Nonetheless, it is undoubtedly the case that in terms of a ratio of readers: influence, compared with supporters; sellers' *The Leninist* must be the most successful publication of any group in the workers' movement in Britain. We certainly far outstrip *Marxism Today* and the *Morning Star* in this respect, as well as the likes of *Socialist Worker*, TNS, and the *News Line*. And this is not because our politics are 'soft', that is, liberalistically or academically acceptable. Far from it; we are a tendency that pulls no punches in polemic and is unashamedly partisan.

5.8 To develop as a tendency in the short term we must slowly but surely transform readers into sympathisers and sympathisers into supporters. The secret to success in this lies in ideological understanding and demanding money, commitment, and hard work. This organisation has no room for those who do not work, who are not committed. We want to build a party which will overthrow the bourgeoisie; if we do not do our best we will achieve nothing. We must strive to find out what we can demand, make activity, create a hot-house atmosphere. This has to go hand in hand with ideological debate and training.

5.9 An important task of the moment is therefore developing a well trained, well educated cadre force. This is the key to expanding our still small readership, above all physically linking the inner-Party struggle with the best militants in the working class movement, as well as drawing centrist readers towards Leninism. This is easily possible in the short term, given:

5.9.1 The intensification of the class struggle.

5.9.2 The inner-Party crisis.

5.9.3 The ideological superiority of Leninism, the fact that it is based on a scientific understanding of the world and a clear revolutionary perspective.

5.10 Because of this there must be no let up in our polemic against opportunist tendencies in the CPGB and other tendencies among the left reformists and the petty bourgeois revolutionary groupings in fact we must make our polemic more wideranging and profound. It is also vital for us to develop a close working relationship with (and to gain recruits from) those sections of the working class at the

forefront of struggle, such as the miners, and to attempt to give communist leadership to them, showing all the time that what is essential for their ultimate victory is the building of a Leninist CPGB, is a dialectical process which demands both the highest level of dedication and polemical (that is, ideological) victory over opportunism (first in the CPGB and then in the movement as a whole), both the steeling of a Leninist cadre force and a broad shift in the working class towards class war consciousness. A Leninist CPGB can only be built when these separate but linked processes are brought together. Without influence over the masses a Leninist CPGB is a Party only in name, without a Leninist CPGB the class war consciousness of the working class will be directionless, its energy and force inevitably dissipated. And without a Leninist CPGB working class victories will always be temporary; it needs a Leninist CPGB if the working class is to guarantee its advances, something only possible through a socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Comrades, let us energetically embrace the work of building a Leninist Communist Party.

* * *

Having overwhelmingly defeated the amendments presented by comrade RT, the conference went on to the *Morning Star* and the forthcoming PPPS AGM.

The 'Morning Star'

The first comrade into the debate was comrade CJ. The comrade described how some of the best elements in the Party were following Chater but how Chater was "orientating the *Morning Star* away from communist politics." We must seek to "break these forces from Chater" and convince them that far from Chater being "the lesser of two evils" he deserves to be defeated. On the other hand the comrade argued the Party leadership's record means "they don't deserve to win". But for Leninists the "place to fight is the CPGB" and our task is to win those good comrades trailing behind Chater "back to the Party".

Comrade CS stated that it would be "grossly incorrect" to offer any support to the Euros and that if we did we would end up like the Straight Leftists, 'alienating' the opposition forces. This was the wrong way to look at things, suggested comrade CJ: "we would do a deal with the devil if it advanced our long term aim. After all, did not Lenin do deals with foreign capitalists; did not the Soviet Union align itself with imperialist Great Britain and the United States against imperialist Germany?" The comrade also cited the situation where in *Left-wing Communism* Lenin advocated that the young CPGB support the Labour Party "like a rope supports a hanged man." "Perhaps one day we may do a deal with the Labour Party, who are certainly far 'worse' than any Euros in our Party; after all, they have run governments which have broken strikes, armed against the Soviet Union, and defended the interests of British imperialism". Our politics are not about "purity" but about "fighting to advance the interests of the working class."

Comrade RT declared a certain "sympathy" with the position of comrade CS simply because a vote for the candidates of the Party EC would "alienate us from the opposition". The Party had "created a Frankenstein monster which had now turned against it," said the comrade.

"For us, which way to vote at the PPPS AGM was not a matter of principle," stated comrade ES, but "a matter of tactics." The "key question was our strategy towards the CPGB;" the comrade explained how Chater could soon be in the Labour Party and that the "suggestion that it would be correct to vote for the EC candidates had produced a reaction from the heart not the head". Comrade CJ agreed and said that comrades who talked of violent revolution on the one hand but could not bring themselves to vote for a Euro were off beam.

Comrade BA declared himself "initially horrified at any suggestion of siding with the EC — but," asked the comrade, "where will Chater be in a year's time?" Leninists "could not rule out any tactic." Comrade RT agreed that there was no principle at stake.

Although at this point it was agreed to maintain the position of abstentionism, following the conference discussions were continued which led to a change in our

tactics. But before returning to this very important question let us conclude our report of the end of the conference.

The last motion presented to the conference was on Turkey.

Turkey

The motion on Turkey was presented by comrade CJ. The purpose of the motion was not to break new ground but to unite the theoretical importance the Leninists attach to Turkey and the revolution in Turkey with practice. This not surprisingly did not prove contentious. Despite this there was some continuation of the debate over our style of work which had commenced on the motion on the Party Crisis. As the arguments around this question had already been fully presented there is little point repeating them suffice to say because conference had already voted for an uncompromisingly Bolshevik approach to the question of organisation and because of a certain degree of moral pressure comrade RT, while defending the amendment arguing against a mechanical imitation of the "organisational and political work used by our comrades in Turkey" was won to abstain on the vote on the amendment rather than voting for it.

Of course what the conference objected to in this amendment was not the letter of it but the Menshevik organisational spirit behind it. On the principle of not giving any ground whatsoever on this question it was considered vital to reject it.

On the motion itself comrades TW, CS, and FP in particular spoke of the importance of the question of Turkey and the revolution in Turkey. The comrades stressed the duty Leninists in Britain had of building a powerful solidarity movement with the struggle for social progress in Turkey. As well as these comrades, one of the delegation from the CPT(İS) also spoke. The comrade explained the need that there was for a powerful solidarity campaign around Turkey and declared that comrades from Turkey had much to learn from Britain in the way of efficiency. While this produced some laughter, the comrade assured the conference that this was indeed the case and proletarian internationalism was definitely a two way process.

After a brief reply to the discussion by comrade CJ the conference carried the motion on Turkey unanimously as it had all other motions. Conference ended with a spirited rendition of *The International* and a militant determination to carry out in practice the resolutions of the Third Conference of the Leninists of the CPGB.

The Resolution on Turkey

1. We Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain consider the best way to fulfil our duty to the world revolution and to strengthening the existing socialist states is to make revolution in our own country. To do this we must both draw on the rich theoretical and practical heritage of our movement and learn from countries where the class struggle has been and is particularly acute.

2. Since the late 1960s the working class and revolutionary movement in Turkey has gone through a stern school of struggle. It has experienced periods of deep-going revolutionary crisis, fascism, and today a regime with authoritarian tendencies. From this struggle has emerged the Communist Party of Turkey (*Iyicin Sesi*). It has reestablished basic Marxist-Leninist principles and applied this method to the situation in Turkey. As such, the CPT(İS) has taken up the banner of Marx and Lenin which has for so long been discarded by so many in our world communist movement.

3. With our analysis of the emerging new general crisis of capitalism we see the emergence of the CPT(İS) as an event with great lessons for workers throughout the world. There is indeed every reason to believe that the lessons already learnt in Turkey and the lessons yet to be learnt could have a similar significance and impact to the Russian revolutions from 1905 to October 1917.

4. Turkey, standing at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, a member of NATO, bordering on the Soviet Union and Bulgaria, and part of the turbulence of the Middle East is in a strategic position in world capitalism. Turkey could well be a precursor for the next stage in the world revolution. Because of this, because of the already existing rich experience, workers and revolutionaries in Britain should be encouraged to learn from Turkey.

5. In this we Leninists have a great responsibility. We ourselves have already attempted to take on board these lessons. We should seriously consider building a solidarity movement in support of the revolution in Turkey. This would of course in no way contradict our struggle to reforge the CPGB; indeed, if successful it would greatly enhance this work.

Postscript: Subsequent Decisions

While the Third Conference had agreed to maintain an abstentionist position on the elections to the PPPS Management Committee it had been made abundantly clear that this was purely a tactical question. As a result of this, almost immediately the conference had ended serious deliberations began again on the advisability of applying the abstentionist tactic at the forthcoming PPPS AGM.

Looking at the political direction of the Chater camp, its course away from communist politics, its attempt to hand over the *Morning Star* to the trade union and labour bureaucracy, and its description of the Communist Party as an "outside body", meant that there could be no question of calling for a vote for its slate. The question was how best to break the healthy forces from Chater and back to the Communist Party, how best to ensure the survival of the *Morning Star* as a Communist Party paper. Abstentionism it was felt had the advantage of presenting a "pox on both houses" position but that was all.

Because of the great danger of liquidationism it was felt that the question of the Party had to be posed in the sharpest possible terms. And after lengthy debate it was decided that in practice what this meant was calling upon all PPPS shareholders to vote for the candidates of the Executive Committee and also calling upon all other candidates to step down in their favour.

This tactical shift definitely had the advantage of emphasising our basic strategy of fighting to reforge the CPGB. Of course there was the danger that some would declare that we had joined the Eurocommunist camp but it was recognised that only charlatans and downright idiots would persist in such assertions if we patently explained our new tactic. Not only would all genuine communists recognise that we have and will continue to have profound ideological differences with Eurocommunism but only we could win comrades back to the CPGB on an uncompromisingly revolutionary platform.

It was agreed that Chater and the logic of events had definitely shifted the whole *Morning Star* issue from being an inner-Party question to being a question of being for or against the Party itself. Certainly, Chater's mobilisation of non-CPGB forces such as the NCP, sections of the Labour Party, not least Moss Evans, Arthur Scargill, and Tony Benn, against the Executive Committee proved this and demanded the firmest possible stand on principle from Leninists.

Because Chater has been treating the *Morning Star* as a piece of personal property, because the EC were standing for the idea of the Party, and because the Chater camp had taken a qualitative step forward in its liquidationism we had to fight for all CPGB members to vote for the candidates of the EC.

Not only was this change in tactic thoroughly discussed by the leading supporters of *The Leninist*, but all participants at the Third Conference were consulted and they unanimously agreed to the change. We were also pleased that one candidate standing for the Management Committee followed our call and stood down in favour of the candidates of the EC. Of course we did not expect our call to produce a mass desertion from Chater; indeed some sympathisers of *The Leninist* voted for the Management Committee slate.

The Chaterite victory by a 1,000 vote margin shows the desperate need for a sustained ideological offensive against Chater's position and political orientation. This is something that the Euros with their woolly appeal to liberal opinion and fear of militant working class action cannot possibly successfully carry out. Only Leninism can turn the tables on Chater's liquidationism and win back the thousands of good communists who are at present following him in the incorrect belief that he is the lesser of two evils.

Jack Conrad

ON THURSDAY March 21 ten thousand school students in Glasgow marched on the city centre. Similar displays of school students' militancy were seen up and down the country soon after. The reason? The demonstrations were the result of the campaign by the Militant dominated LPYS and Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign (YTURC) for a half day school strike to protest against the Youth Training Scheme.

Militant was quite understandably highly chuffed, if somewhat surprised, by the response, apparently having only expected only 1,000 to 1,500 school students at the Glasgow demonstration.

Such an enthusiastic and unexpected response from school students has prompted the resurrection of the idea of a school students' union. (This of course to be graced with a *Militant* leadership.) Remember the National Union of School Students? Bureaucratically dominated and manipulated by, respectively, the YCL, the LPYS, and the SWP, its death was slow; painful, and sadly inevitable, with each of the three organisations squeezing every recruit possible from the (ever decreasing) ranks of NUSS activists. There can be little doubt of the future of a new school students' union dominated by *Militant*; yesterday's lessons are too fresh in the memory. Other organisations wanting 'in on the act' found it virtually impossible to get information on LPYS organised meetings held to initiate the union.

However, a brief glance at the LPYS's parent party finds the Labour Party leadership not exactly enthused by the sudden discovery of this writhing mass of angry youth. The bourgeoisie's favourite 'socialist' Neil 'Judas' Kinnock referred to the young strikers as a "bunch of dasties". Well, the strikes clearly rattled Kinnock and all his drinking partners from both sides of the House. Tens of thousands of angry working class youths marching the streets is understandably a little disconcerting for our 'guardians of British democracy'.

The Acceptable Face of Slavery

The YTS is the successor to the Youth Opportunities Programme, introduced by the Labour government in 1978, which itself replaced two other schemes, the Job Creation and Work Experience programmes. The YOP reached the heights of infamy for instructing young people to cut grass in parks with nail scissors, and other such gainful employment.

YOP dealt with 16-18 year olds, and at its inception 234,000 young unemployed a year were to pass through its ranks. However, between 1975 and 1980 under Labour unemployment doubled from one to two million. The Conservative government therefore found YOP insufficient to deal with growing youth unemployment and to meet the needs of capitalists for cheap non-unionised labour. YOP was scrapped and in September 1983 was replaced with the Youth Training Scheme.

The length of training (i.e. naked exploitation) was doubled from six months under YOP to one year on the new YTS. YTS and previous schemes have resulted in a high degree of job substitution with unionised workers paid a union rate being replaced by the young unemployed receiving subsistence wages from the state. Just watch those profits rise!

Marx wrote that it was the five unemployed workers who stood outside the factory gates that decided the wages of the ninety-five inside. Unemployment has not only forced down the wages of those in work but in the guise of YTS has



A rising tide of anger

The stirrings amongst youth are to be welcomed of themselves as they point to deep movement in society in general. But what is crucial now is to harness and direct the energy and anger of youth in a revolutionary direction.

forced them out of work altogether, to be substituted by YTSers who themselves will be thrown back onto the streets a year later.

TUC Treachery

Faced with such attacks as these on workers' living standards, their leaders in the trade union movement may be expected to react in a way that would prove to be beneficial both to their rank and file and those forced into YTS labour. Those who cling to such vain hopes will, alas, be sadly disappointed.

Few, surely, can be taken in by the demagogic lies of Willis after the miners' strike. All out union mobilisation to defend trade union and unemployed rights may be what we need but Willis and Co. are damned if we're going to get it! Instead they engage in open class collaboration, eagerly hanging on to the Tories' coat tails as they crush down on working class youth.

After the school strike the TUC released a statement in which it "deplored the activity of YTURC in calling a strike for schoolchildren". Such action was, the TUC said, "improper, and exploiting people for political purposes." It seems the TUC would prefer that working class youth just be exploited for economic purposes.

At the 1983 TUC Congress Bill Keys reassured the TUC's support for YTS: "We cannot walk away from

the youth of the nation. Where do the young people go to if we as a British trade union movement walk away from them?" Apparently Keys would rather see the Tories walk over them.

Not content to act as cheerleaders for the Tories' assault on our class the TUC bureaucrats feel obliged to participate directly in the dirty work. Trade union bureaucrats sit on the Manpower Boards. And the Tories are not ungrateful. Cabinet minister Tom King expressed his profound gratitude in the February 1984 parliamentary debate on youth unemployment:

"I pay tribute to the work and leadership of the trade union movement and the TUC in the development and encouragement of the Youth Training Scheme. It does them great credit." Well, at least Willis now knows someone loves him.

But why does the bureaucrats' 'concern' for unemployed youth manifest itself in support for YTS when it is quite obvious that unemployed youth find nothing to support in it whatsoever. The answer is simple and one in which our rotund friend Norman echoes the bourgeoisie: social peace.

Youth Pacification

After the riots in the summer of 1981 the Tories needed no second warning of the dangers of mass youth unemployment. The situation, it was felt, could be

defused and profits boosted if the young potential rioters were taken off the streets and put in factories: a sort of social bromide for unemployed working class youth. The answer: YTS. *The Times*, never backward in coming forward with the facts for its bourgeois readers was as ever on the ball:

"The crude political impulse behind this major act of collective provision costing such a large sum of money is maintaining social peace — YTS is an anti-riot device keeping 16-year olds off the unemployment records and off the street." (*The Times* September 2 1983).

This has been a partial success, but with ever increasing unemployment and the economic and social degeneration of capitalism the cracks are beginning to appear. Proof of this can be seen in the school strikes and clashes between black youth and police at the Newham 7 demonstrations. More will come.

Sacrificed For £26.50

If YTS is to stop police and capitalists being lynched by unemployed working class youth, the opposite quite clearly isn't true. Six people died in the first sixteen months of the YTS. George McCormack died in a minibus crash at work; Sarah Canons, crushed to death by a tractor on a farm near Swindon; Charles Tyrer — his body

was found face down in five inches of slurry in a tank in a Birmingham factory. All were on Youth Training Schemes at the time, murdered by the capitalists for profit. The rate of deaths and serious injuries is nearly one and a half times higher for those on YTS than for ordinary workers, mainly due to poor supervision. This of course is of no consequence to the bosses. YTS workers are just an expendable commodity, and after all, there are plenty more waiting in line in the schools and dole queues, aren't there?

Congscription

With such conditions and so little money it is little wonder that unemployed youth are hardly eager to fill places on YTS. To counter this understandable reluctance the Tories have in the past responded by cutting college and further education places. However, harsher measures are in the pipeline. On March 21 in Commons' Question Time, Margaret Thatcher told MPs: "When the full YTS scheme is in place I believe it would be right to say to young people 'you either have a job, or a chance of training, or education; and unemployment should not be an option.'

The government plans to make YTS compulsory for unemployed youth from 1986, and from 1988 to extend the scheme from one to two years. The ruling class now seeks to utilise the vast reserve army of labour of unemployed youth to a far greater extent than ever before. The adverse effects on our whole class will be considerable.

Fight Back, Organise!

The continued assault on working class youth is a concrete example of the inability of reformism (however 'left') to repel such attacks. Kinnock and Willis openly betray our class. That enfant terrible of the Labour Party, *Militant*, however, channels revolutionary minded youth into a bourgeois workers' party with revolutionary sloganising to forever bang their heads against Labour's bureaucracy, effectively neutralising them.

In our own Party the Euros blissfully slumber on, unaware apparently of the turmoil that surrounds them. In the recent YCL Congress the General Council in its draft resolutions saw fit only to make passing reference to YTS: "Greater efforts must be made in the monitoring of YTS and the recruitment of trainees to the scheme." Don't expect to be knocked over by the crowds of revolutionary youth flocking to the banner of the YCL if that is the best you can offer them, comrades!

As revolutionaries we do not look to the 'cap in hand' Jarrow Crusade of 1936, or its bastard child the 'bishops to brickies' People's March for Jobs so loved by the Euros. Instead we seek to draw relevant lessons from the National Unemployed Workers' Movement and hunger marches of the '20s and '30s, and the leadership given to these by the CPGB (see *The Leninist* no 5). Unemployed workers were organised through communist leadership, guided by a revolutionary programme. Direct links were forged with militant workers in the workplaces through the NUWM, the driving force behind the unemployed struggles in the '20s and '30s.

The role of a serious and militant Communist Party in the successes of unemployed workers' battles then, illustrates the need for such a party now. Workers will only achieve real gains in this fight against unemployment and YTS if they reject all brands of reformism.

Organise the unemployed!
Unionise the school students and unemployed!
Smash the YTS!

Steve Jardine

(and confronts us with Brian Hancock and Russell Shankland having been captured and now incarcerated by the state), Catliness and Simon say.

"There is a good argument against individual acts of violence and the 'hit squads' that sprang up in some mining communities" (emphasis in original, p.192).

So, miners should not have defended themselves or their strike in a physical fashion according to the SWP. "The only argument against attacks on individual scabs was that they were not a way to win the strike. They were not a substitute for mass picketing... they weren't a substitute for real solidarity..." (p.194).

The "real argument against 'hit squads'" (p.194) and all miners' violence is to counterpose undefended mass pickets. In other words, line up many more skulls for the well-armed, well-trained police hordes to crack. Perhaps policemen's arms eventually become so tired wielding truncheons all day that they can be pushed gently aside by any pickets who may be left standing.

In reality the lesson for the SWP is the confirmation that "the strike revealed clearly the scale of the downturn in the class struggle" (p.234). This insane conclusion leads it on to the next 'realistic' move to the right. Now the SWP is looking to provide the personnel for a rescue of the British trade union movement, and more particularly of its bureaucracy. After all, apparently "Even quite right-wing trade union leaders may fight back if attacked, if only in a bureaucratic and timid fashion... they have a vested interest in preserving trade unions' basic strength..." (p.226). An accommodation with even the right in the trade union bureaucracies is not beyond the pale for the SWP, that is clear.

How this accommodation with trade union bureaucracy slithers out is as the SWP's stated desire to rebuild the trade union movement. Despite frequent references to 1926 the SWP now apparently does feel that 1985 is not as bad as 1927. Unable to fudge it, the authors come clean at last: "Above all, the mood of the miners at the end of the 1984-5 strike was radically different to their morale at the end of the 1926 lockout." (p.224). Apart from being true, and a reflection of the absence of strategic defeat of the working class, this flies in the face of that other recent SWP pronouncement concerning the strike, that is, the description by the *Socialist Worker* editor (even before the strike was over) of early 1985 being more like 1927 than 1926 or 1925.

The fact that the SWP cannot see much further than the end of its collective nose is lamentably underlined in an assertion which should long dog its footsteps:

"Alas, the 1984-5 miners' strike did not see even the remotest beginnings of workers' councils." (p.251).

No one closely involved with the Miners' Support Groups, as the SWP later became, can honestly believe this. Whilst the MSGs did not become transformed into Councils of Action (as we argued they should) there was the realistic possibility that they could be and, more importantly, the undeniable immediate requirement of the miners' struggle that they should be so transformed. Given that, and Lenin's correct assessment of the 1920 Councils of Action in Britain as "soviets in embryo", the SWP's inability or refusal to recognise such beginnings in the miners' Great Strike is inexcusable. The Great Strike sees "Solidarnosc in Poland 1980-1" (p.251) as more its kind of soviet.

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Peter Butler

Quite wrong Mr Walker



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DESPITE THE author's attempted humorous style, the jollity of his approach is often scratched away to reveal the lead balloon of the NCP's prejudices. Denver Walker, a leading member of the New Communist Party, peppers the "Trotskyist" battalions indiscriminately; unfortunately a good deal of his fire is, in ignorance, directed at pillars of Leninist truth.

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children. His range is not, however, matched by his depth. The superficiality of his view, while it might even enhance the chance of *Quite Right* becoming an NCP best-seller, is no excuse for his confusion of Leninist positions with those of Trotsky. For example, he approves the class collaborationism of our Party in the 1930s by implication — since Trotskyists opposed it in their own liquidationist fashion.

Coming to the present day Labour Party, the author indicates that he does not share Lenin's characterisation of it as a "bourgeois workers' party". The real criticism to be made of the Trotskyist movement is, though, that it deserted the Communist Party, giving it up as 'counterrevolutionary', only to find itself (in its different fragments at different times) cavorting around in the Labour Party, a truly counterrevolutionary party.

Throughout, the author endeavours to ridicule the parties and groups he is considering from the right of them. No doubt the cavalier use by the NCP and our Party's centrists of the term 'ultra-left' (i.e. 'to the left of me') has something to do with it. So whilst he is capable of demolishing Trotskyist support for the ultra-reactionary *Solidarnosc*, as well as other targets that Leninists would thoroughly approve of in defending the socialist countries, he ends up with a near-Bennite position on withdrawal from the EEC being "a question of 'national liberation' for Britain" (p.114).

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Peter Butler

Star Lovers

For Communist Unity New Communist Party, London 1985. pp.13 20p.

THE main question that the publication of this pamphlet raises is why, after eight years since its split from the CPGB, has the NCP only now published a pamphlet calling for communist unity? The answer to this lies in the ideological poverty of the NCP and the weakness of centrism generally.

This ideological poverty was clearly shown when the NCP split from the CPGB in 1977, when, as comrade John Chamberlain (former NCP National Organiser) stated in *The Leninist* (May 1985) "there were no pamphlets, no unofficial papers, no honest polemical articles in the Party press presenting their political strategy and the need for an immediate schism; certainly there was nothing remotely resembling open ideological struggle."

Indeed, an indication of the poverty of the NCP was shown by the fact that in the run up to the Special Congress of the CPGB, when there were many centrists in the CPGB on the verge of leaving the Party, the NCP remained somnolent, not galvanising its remaining membership to draw the centrists into it. Additionally, its shying away from open debate with *Proletarian* is an indication of the NCP's insularity and its fear of exposing its rapidly dwindling numbers to any other tendency, even another centrist one.

The introduction to the pamphlet paints a rosy picture of the NCP. It boasts to the world that "the party has its own premises and its own press" and "has 17 comrades working for it on a full time basis" (p.1). With only a membership of about 250, we can only guess at the sacrifices of these 250 members to enable the party to keep these full time workers. Or there again, could diplomatic internationalism have something to do with NCP finances?

However, does the pamphlet provide any basis "for communist unity"? This can be easily answered if the NCP position on the capitalist crisis, the peace question, the role of the vanguard party, the tasks ahead, and future policy are analysed.

On the capitalist crisis, the NCP explanation of the cause is the theory so much beloved of our Eurocommunists and

centrists, SWPers, and Labourites of various kinds; that is, the theory of underconsumption, which is essentially Keynesian and definitely not Marxist.

On the peace question, the NCP, while mentioning the role of US imperialism, underplays the threat posed by British imperialism. In other words, it objectively diverts attention away from the need for revolution against one's own bourgeoisie. Indeed, because of its diplomatic internationalism towards the Soviet Union and its classic centrism the NCP can call Soviet foreign policy "... in accordance with the Leninist principles of peaceful co-existence" (p.5). While certainly this is a correct principle for the Soviet state, for the CPSU it is a totally different matter, for the existence of the Soviet Union as a socialist state and ultimately its development towards communist society depends above all on socialist revolution worldwide, and particularly in the advanced capitalist countries.

On the question of peace Lenin asked and answered the following question: "Is there a way to peace without an exchange of annexations, without the division of spoils among the capitalist robbers? There is: through a workers' revolution against the capitalists of the world." (Lenin, *CW Vol.25*, p.55). It is this basic Leninist principle that centrism has sought to bury.

In the NCP constitution, part of Rule 2 states that "The New Communist Party shall always strive to fulfil the role of the vanguard party of the British working class..." However, it is clear that the NCP, instead of building a mass revolutionary workers' party looks to the working class to be "involved in the necessary campaign to enable the New Communist Party to affiliate to the Labour Party" (p.7); by way of this affiliation the NCP sees the Labour Party as the vanguard party which can lead the socialist revolution in Britain.

So what the NCP seeks to do is to channel growing discontent among the working class into the Labour Party that is (and always will be) committed to change through parliament and away from socialist revolution. The pamphlet states "that the Labour Party is the mass-based political party of the working class" (pp.6-7); but this is a distorted picture of the Labour Party, for as Lenin said, "... whether or not a party is a political party of the workers does not depend solely upon a membership of workers but also upon the men that lead it, and the content of its actions and its political tactics" (Lenin *CW Vol.31*, p.257). Because of this perspective of its eventual affiliation to the Labour Party, the NCP does not field candidates in elections and calls upon the working class to "vote Labour everywhere" (p.7), even against CPGB candidates; in other words, the Labour Party is everything.

Thus the NCP is classically centrist, for while it correctly opposes the Alternative Economic Strategy and sees the conflict in the Six Counties as a national liberation struggle, it also looks to the Labour Party to become the revolutionary party and gives a Keynesian analysis of the capitalist crisis. As centrism is a vacillating ideology, open to the pulls of events both nationally and internationally, and in particular to the actions and official position of the CPSU at any given moment, because of this the NCP is unable to advance the tactics or a strategy for British conditions and the British revolution, as part of the world revolutionary process.

Therefore, does this pamphlet provide any basis "for communist unity"? Absolutely not. Ironically while the NCP specifically split from our CPGB against the 1977 Draft of the BRS it is transparently clear that its offers of "communist unity" are directed solely to the Chatterites who declare themselves the true defenders of that very document. Because it would be a marriage of convenience such "communist unity" is unprincipled and thus destined to flounder at the first serious test. Moreover the liquidationism of both marriage partners can only produce despair, demoralisation, and disillusionment. Inevitably salvation will be sought in the suicidal swamp of Labourism. Certainly such an unstable centrist marriage cannot lead a British revolution; for that what is needed is consistent Leninism.

Dennis Gee

REVIEWS

NUM Rules



Is Arthur a 'Stalinist' monster... a revolutionary saint...

National Executive Committee of the NUM, *Preliminary Agenda of the Special Rules Revision Conference 1985*, 1985, pp.34.

"I urge our membership to recognise the forces which are behind this campaign against our new rules. I urge them to mandate their delegates to the July conference to give us a rule book which will protect our union against those forces..."

(Arthur Scargill, in the May issue of *The Miner*).

Superficially many would argue that the 'Preliminary Agenda of the Special Rules Revision Conference' to be held in July in Sheffield contains little that is new. The sovereignty of the national conference is upheld and the existing structures of the union — such as Areas or delegate conferences — remain untouched. As the quote above suggests, the national leadership of the union is keen to promote the issue as essentially a vote of confidence in the leadership against the challenge of the scab right. We argue however, that the issues are not as simple as that and the rank and file should not be flustered into signing a blank cheque for anyone in the union, especially as even the most militant and left elements of the NUM proved themselves unable to provide the miners with a winning strategy throughout those twelve hard months.

In some ways, the new clause removing the presidential casting vote is typical of the overall thrust of the new proposals. On the one hand it can be argued that this is designed to prevent Arthur from being railroaded into an election under the pressure of and on a terrain decided by the bosses' media. But far more significantly from the point of view of the union's rank and file, this innovation would mark a significant retreat from Arthur's very healthy position when elected in 1981 — to be willing to submit himself unconditionally for regular reselection. Then of course he had just been elected on the basis of a massive vote of confidence: now, after a year of a bitter strike that saw important areas and by the end of the strike over 50% of the rank and file of the union back at work, Arthur's willingness to entrust himself to the opinions of the miners is clearly less marked. The basic problem remains unchanged. Scargill was outstanding in comparison to other union tops. But as a left reformist he simply did not have the politics to win this strike. Now the strike has been defeated, the lack of a cutting edge to the politics of the left of the NUM lead them to be wary of their ability to win the rank and file to back their actions. Thus Arthur and the left reformists insulate themselves from the grassroots rather than face some hard political tasks.

This is confirmed by the fact that although the changes have been presented under the banner of 'New Rules for Democracy', the proposals which appear to make the union more accountable in reality are cosmetic changes. For example, the idea that all Area officials elected before August 1

1983 must come up for regular reelection every five years appears on the face of it to introduce more democracy into the Area structures. In practice however this is a false impression as the vast bulk of Area officials were elected before this date. Thus presumably this majority of the local union structure will never come up for reelection. Similarly, getting rid of officials by rank and file action is now so difficult as to be practically impossible: it will require a 2:1 majority in up to three votes! Hardly a move likely to facilitate greater accountability of the structure to the NUM.

The same could be said of rule 26c. While on the face of it this rule change could be presented as a step towards a truly national union, in reality its effects are likely to be a little different. The rule itself states that:

"The NEC shall have the power to call industrial action by any group of members whether in one or part of one or more than one Area and such action shall be deemed to be official." (p.18)

As we have pointed out previously, the fight for a national union and against the sectionalism that crippled much of the union's work during the strike is related to the reform of the 'gothic' structure of the NUM inherited from the union's founding in 1945. Rule 26 removes onus from the NEC to call a national ballot in order to initiate Area action, this despite the fact that the requirement for a decisive national ballot has been reduced to a simple majority. It is thus indicative of the leadership's mistrust of their rank and file. For example, in the *Financial Times* of May 15 1985, Peter Heathfield defended this innovation against its critics:

"In the past the executive has only had the power to approve applications for strikes from the Areas."

"This meant at least twice in 1984 that rulings against strike action in certain Areas were applied to the national union for supporting those strikes. This led to the courts sequestering our funds."

Heathfield defends the changes, then not on the basis of helping to bolster the fighting capacity of the national union, but in terms of legal manoeuvres. Militant miners should likewise have no illusions in them.

Paul Whetton of Notts has been reported as saying that he would have had "strong reservations" if these rule changes had been proposed by the right, but "unfortunately we've got to play with the cards we are dealt." This argument is fairly typical amongst many militants in the union. They see the dangers in these new proposals, but they reason, given the NUM is a left led union, we have to make the best out of a bad job. We argue against that line. Scargill was and is outstanding in comparison to other union tops in Britain today, yet he showed during the course of the Great Strike that he had severe limitations. Thus it is not simply a danger of the right taking over the union at some date in the future inheriting Scargill's centralised set up and using it for their 'evil' purposes. The left of the union already proved themselves to be incapable of winning confrontations with the government and NCB in the 1980s. The last thing that militants want to do now is invest still greater powers into the hands of men who although not class traitors are, so obviously hampered by the politics of the past. The fight now must be to subordinate the leadership to the rank and file militants, not to isolate it still further from them.

Alec Long

One step back

Magnificent Miners: Socialist Organiser Special Issue Socialist Organiser Alliance, London March 19 1985 pp.64 £0.75.

David Reed and Olivia Adamson Miners' Strike 1984-1985; People Versus State Larkin Publications, London 1985 pp.132 £2.50

THE SOCIALIST ORGANISER Alliance is besotted with the Labour Party. From the first page introduction, where Paul Whetton declares gladly that miners did not turn from the Labour Party ("though it could be argued

as justified" if they did, he admits), to the call to transform the trade unions and the Labour Party on p.61 this Trotskyist organisation binds itself closely to the bourgeois workers' party and denies utterly (and has shown itself ignorant of) the Communist Party.

Magnificent Miners is continually looking over its shoulder in case it offends the wrong people. In looking at the 1984 TUC where the dirty deal was hatched to keep the miners' anger off the agenda there is no indication here that the eventual toothless resolution was anything other than acceptable. Again, there is no criticism at the first mention of the lack of a ballot at the start of the strike; indeed, the NUM was apparently "100% right to refuse to go to a ballot" (p.5); later (p.36), on second thoughts, it is conceded that this "may have been a tactical error." However, *Magnificent Miners* does not equivocate over women's role in the strike: "pit women would cite the women's peace camp at Greenham Common as an inspiration" (p.8), eventually leading it to conclude its definition of the new women's movement that is needed. This must be a "working class based women's movement," following a breakdown of the "division between a male-dominated labour movement and a middle-class women's movement" (p.24). A sort of collaboration, you might say, between women of opposing classes.

The offering from the Revolutionary Communist Group, culled largely from its weekly *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*, falls into the same trap over the women of the coalfields. *Miners' Strike*, too, vaunts the ladies of Greenham: "The courage and determination of the Greenham Common women is regarded by these women as an inspiration." (p.29). The RCG is not now, of course, a Trotskyist group. But the petty bourgeois nature of its revolutionism leads it into areas of agreement with the Socialist Organiser Alliance. For example, *Miners'*



...or a left reformist

Strike praises Scargill's "refusal to condemn miners' violence" (p.5) just as *Magnificent Miners* asks "How would it have helped if Arthur Scargill had condemned miners' violence?" (p.34); neither publication has the honesty to tell its readers that Scargill did condemn miners' violence when it occurred away from the picket. Most particularly, he condemned the Wilkie incident.

For the RCG, the miners who struck became, just as blacks from the USA or Japanese visiting South Africa become 'honorary whites', honorary 'oppressed'. The labour aristocracy, within which were miners before the Great Strike, was the ranks of untouchables for the RCG (and still is). Only striking miners qualified for demotion from 'labour aristo' to 'oppressed' in RCG terms, because their wage rates were much lower than those of the scabs in Notts. Presumably the striking miners in the 'rich' areas (like Notts) have to be considered 'extra specially honorary oppressed'.

Huff and puff from the *Miners' Strike* about supporting workers' violence as the "revolutionary violence of the oppressed" (p.48) can hardly disguise the fact that it makes no assessment of the experienced need for more organisation of hit squads or that they should have been better organised; nor does it call for defence of picket lines.

Magnificent Miners actually does call for "Workers' self defence" (p.50), although instead of pointing to the obvious Workers' Defence Corps of the 1926 General Strike prefers a US example from 1934. However, the effect is spoiled somewhat on the previous page (p.49) in a reference to "rash or inappropriate tactics" which are for the miners to sort out (i.e. for Scargill to condemn); a mild criticism of the NUM's failure to organise its self defence is also linked to the union's failure to "press home the arguments about police accountability" (p.34). Another sign of Labour Party reformism getting hold of erstwhile revolutionaries; is community policing next?

Neither publication is exactly keen on the general strike, though *Magnificent Miners* reiterates its mouthings about such a call.

The RCG was more open in its opposition to a general strike, and *Miners' Strike* tells us why: a general strike call was "unrealistic" (the TUC and Labour Party would not break the law), "dangerous, and could lead to demoralisation and inactivity" (p.80). It considers that the failure of a general strike would split every major union in two. Of course it was a general strike, a workers' offensive, that would have aided the striking miners the greatest. Pathetically, *Miners' Strike*'s remedy was for the MSGs to picket police stations to draw police away from picket lines; it does not recognise the potential for development that these organisations had, given the right lead.

Magnificent Miners backtracks from the general strike call: it recalls the position its organisation took up in late 1984 of calling for a recall TUC to examine why the trade union bureaucrats had not delivered their promised solidarity. Perhaps then a (truly waste of time) 24 hour strike could have been called, it says. And in the mean time we've all to work harder to make the police more "accountable": "increase massively the powers of local police committees" (p.51).

Both publications speak volumes about the petty bourgeois revolutionaries who wrote them but give the working class movement nothing in the way of direction or a real appreciation of the miners' Great Strike, a struggle that we need to learn from and to build on.

Peter Butler

Two steps back

Alex Callinicos and Mike Simons *The Great Strike* Socialist Worker, London 1985 pp.256 £3.95.

THE SOCIALIST Workers' Party and its role in the miners' Great Strike must be severely criticised. As we stated at the time, the SWP was originally a strong opponent of the Miners' Support Groups. However, after initially castigating MSGs as 'tin-rattlers' the SWP saw them gaining influence and prestige in the working class movement. Six months into the miners' strike it was this achievement that spurred the SWP into flooding its members into MSGs. The possibilities of recruiting miners and others from the working class movement was too good an opportunity to miss.

The Great Strike looks back on the SWP's role in the miners' Great Strike as an overwhelmingly good thing. Apart from one small self-criticism (about the over-optimistic reports of coal stocks declining) the SWP's general approach during the strike is confirmed by the authors.

Not once in *The Great Strike* do the authors mention the absolute essential for the miners' pickets: that they be defended pickets. Descriptions of how miners fought bravely against the blue scum are presented unalloyed with any demand for Workers' Defence Corps. The miners were first and last to be viewed as simple victims of police violence. The "savagery of the police" was almost too, too much for the SWP's verbal condemnation. But that was all.

When it came to particular acts of violence perpetrated by striking miners, however, the SWP felt and feels no compunction about condemning it. So it is that following mention of the concrete post which ended the career of scab-lover Wilkie

(and confronts us with Brian Hancock and Russell Shankland having been captured and now incarcerated by the state), Catliness and Simon say.

"There is a good argument against individual acts of violence and the 'hit squads' that sprang up in some mining communities" (emphasis in original, p.192).

So, miners should not have defended themselves or their strike in a physical fashion according to the SWP. "The only argument against attacks on individual scabs was that they were not a way to win the strike. They were not a substitute for mass picketing... they weren't a substitute for real solidarity..." (p.194).

The "real argument against 'hit squads'" (p.194) and all miners' violence is to counterpose undefended mass pickets. In other words, line up many more skulls for the well-armed, well-trained police hordes to crack. Perhaps policemen's arms eventually become so tired wielding truncheons all day that they can be pushed gently aside by any pickets who may be left standing.

In reality the lesson for the SWP is the confirmation that "the strike revealed clearly the scale of the downturn in the class struggle" (p.234). This insane conclusion leads it on to the next 'realistic' move to the right. Now the SWP is looking to provide the personnel for a rescue of the British trade union movement, and more particularly of its bureaucracy. After all, apparently "Even quite right-wing trade union leaders may fight back if attacked, if only in a bureaucratic and timid fashion... they have a vested interest in preserving trade unions' basic strength..." (p.226). An accommodation with even the right in the trade union bureaucracies is not beyond the pale for the SWP, that is clear.

How this accommodation with trade union bureaucracy slithers out is as the SWP's stated desire to rebuild the trade union movement. Despite frequent references to 1926 the SWP now apparently does feel that 1985 is not as bad as 1927. Unable to fudge it, the authors come clean at last: "Above all, the mood of the miners at the end of the 1984-5 strike was radically different to their morale at the end of the 1926 lockout." (p.224). Apart from being true, and a reflection of the absence of strategic defeat of the working class, this flies in the face of that other recent SWP pronouncement concerning the strike, that is, the description by the *Socialist Worker* editor (even before the strike was over) of early 1985 being more like 1927 than 1926 or 1925.

The fact that the SWP cannot see much further than the end of its collective nose is lamentably underlined in an assertion which should long dog its footsteps:

"Alas, the 1984-5 miners' strike did not see even the remotest beginnings of workers' councils." (p.251).

No one closely involved with the Miners' Support Groups, as the SWP later became, can honestly believe this. Whilst the MSGs did not become transformed into Councils of Action (as we argued they should) there was the realistic possibility that they could be and, more importantly, the undeniable immediate requirement of the miners' struggle that they should be so transformed. Given that, and Lenin's correct assessment of the 1920 Councils of Action in Britain as "soviets in embryo", the SWP's inability or refusal to recognise such beginnings in the miners' Great Strike is inexcusable. The Great Strike sees "Solidarnosc in Poland 1980-1" (p.251) as more its kind of soviet.

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THE main question that the publication of this pamphlet raises is why, after eight years since its split from the CPGB, has the NCP only now published a pamphlet calling for communist unity? The answer to this lies in the ideological poverty of the NCP and the weakness of centrism generally.

This ideological poverty was clearly shown when the NCP split from the CPGB in 1977, when, as comrade John Chamberlain (former NCP National Organiser) stated in *The Leninist* (May 1985) "there were no pamphlets, no unofficial papers, no honest polemical articles in the Party press presenting their political strategy and the need for an immediate schism; certainly there was nothing remotely resembling open ideological struggle."

Indeed, an indication of the poverty of the NCP was shown by the fact that in the run up to the Special Congress of the CPGB, when there were many centrists in the CPGB on the verge of leaving the Party, the NCP remained somnolent, not galvanising its remaining membership to draw the centrists into it. Additionally, its shying away from open debate with *Proletarian* is an indication of the NCP's insularity and its fear of exposing its rapidly dwindling numbers to any other tendency, even another centrist one.

The introduction to the pamphlet paints a rosy picture of the NCP. It boasts to the world that "the party has its own premises and its own press" and "has 17 comrades working for it on a full time basis" (p.1). With only a membership of about 250, we can only guess at the sacrifices of these 250 members to enable the party to keep these full time workers. Or there again, could diplomatic internationalism have something to do with NCP finances?

However, does the pamphlet provide any basis "for communist unity"? This can be easily answered if the NCP position on the capitalist crisis, the peace question, the role of the vanguard party, the tasks ahead, and future policy are analysed.

On the capitalist crisis, the NCP explanation of the cause is the theory so much beloved of our Eurocommunists and

centrists, SWPers, and Labourites of various kinds; that is, the theory of underconsumption, which is essentially Keynesian and definitely not Marxist.

On the peace question, the NCP, while mentioning the role of US imperialism, underplays the threat posed by British imperialism. In other words, it objectively diverts attention away from the need for revolution against one's own bourgeoisie. Indeed, because of its diplomatic internationalism towards the Soviet Union and its classic centrism the NCP can call Soviet foreign policy "... in accordance with the Leninist principles of peaceful co-existence" (p.5). While certainly this is a correct principle for the Soviet state, for the CPSU it is a totally different matter, for the existence of the Soviet Union as a socialist state and ultimately its development towards communist society depends above all on socialist revolution worldwide, and particularly in the advanced capitalist countries.

On the question of peace Lenin asked and answered the following question: "Is there a way to peace without an exchange of annexations, without the division of spoils among the capitalist robbers? There is: through a workers' revolution against the capitalists of the world." (Lenin, *CW Vol.25*, p.55). It is this basic Leninist principle that centrism has sought to bury.

In the NCP constitution, part of Rule 2 states that "The New Communist Party shall always strive to fulfil the role of the vanguard party of the British working class..." However, it is clear that the NCP, instead of building a mass revolutionary workers' party looks to the working class to be "involved in the necessary campaign to enable the New Communist Party to affiliate to the Labour Party" (p.7); by way of this affiliation the NCP sees the Labour Party as the vanguard party which can lead the socialist revolution in Britain.

So what the NCP seeks to do is to channel growing discontent among the working class into the Labour Party that is (and always will be) committed to change through parliament and away from socialist revolution. The pamphlet states "that the Labour Party is the mass-based political party of the working class" (pp.6-7); but this is a distorted picture of the Labour Party, for as Lenin said, "... whether or not a party is a political party of the workers does not depend solely upon a membership of workers but also upon the men that lead it, and the content of its actions and its political tactics" (Lenin *CW Vol.31*, p.257). Because of this perspective of its eventual affiliation to the Labour Party, the NCP does not field candidates in elections and calls upon the working class to "vote Labour everywhere" (p.7), even against CPGB candidates; in other words, the Labour Party is everything.

Thus the NCP is classically centrist, for while it correctly opposes the Alternative Economic Strategy and sees the conflict in the Six Counties as a national liberation struggle, it also looks to the Labour Party to become the revolutionary party and gives a Keynesian analysis of the capitalist crisis. As centrism is a vacillating ideology, open to the pulls of events both nationally and internationally, and in particular to the actions and official position of the CPSU at any given moment, because of this the NCP is unable to advance the tactics or a strategy for British conditions and the British revolution, as part of the world revolutionary process.

Therefore, does this pamphlet provide any basis "for communist unity"? Absolutely not. Ironically while the NCP specifically split from our CPGB against the 1977 Draft of the BRS it is transparently clear that its offers of "communist unity" are directed solely to the Chatterites who declare themselves the true defenders of that very document. Because it would be a marriage of convenience such "communist unity" is unprincipled and thus destined to flounder at the first serious test. Moreover the liquidationism of both marriage partners can only produce despair, demoralisation, and disillusionment. Inevitably salvation will be sought in the suicidal swamp of Labourism. Certainly such an unstable centrist marriage cannot lead a British revolution; for that what is needed is consistent Leninism.

Dennis Gee

REVOLUTION NEARS IN SOUTH AFRICA

"The revolutionary situation in South Africa is maturing. The nation-wide crisis is deepening, affecting both the oppressed and the exploited as well as the oppressors and exploiters. Increasingly, the ruling class acts in a way which shows that it cannot rule in the old way. At the same time, growing numbers among the exploited classes and the oppressed fully realise that revolution is necessary and are prepared to die for it." (Statement of the Central Committee of the South African Communist Party, January 1985, in *African Communist* No. 101)

The revolutionary situation that burst upon the scene in 1976 was deeply rooted in the objective social and economic conditions of South Africa. With the ending of the boom of the 1960s and early 1970s throughout the world economy, South Africa, being highly integrated with the economies of British and increasingly US imperialism, began to exhibit the first stark signs of crisis, symptomised by instability of gold prices and rising inflation, and an increase in unemployment to 2 million. Despite increases in investment in manufacturing (particularly American) during the 1970s, both unemployment and inflation continued to remain at a high level. The last five years witnessed an increase in black unemployment to over 3 million, the highest inflation since 1924, a slump of gold against the dollar and a recession in manufacturing reaching its greatest intensity in the last two years.

The objective conditions are not simply economic however but also encompass a profound political crisis, both elements being closely interrelated.

The institutionalisation of racism in the form of the brutal bureaucratic monster of the Apartheid state with its stifling range of restrictions on the non-white majority: pass laws, migrant labour laws, colour bars and job reservation, was engineered by the ruling white racist regime in order to provide masses of controllable cheap labour for local and transnational monopolies to make their superprofits.

Though the Soweto insurrection of 1976 was triggered by the insulting attempt to make African students learn in Afrikaans it rapidly erupted into demands for the wholesale smashing of the Apartheid state and in protest against the worsening conditions for blacks as they bore the brunt of the emerging economic crisis. Thus the underlying economic system of superexploitation and the increasingly intolerable national oppression and denial of democracy for Indians, Coloureds and blacks represented by unemployment, mass poverty, Bantustans and 'Afrikaans'

gave rise to one of the three symptoms of a revolutionary situation outlined by Lenin — that the oppressed classes "do not want to live in the old way".

The second symptom Lenin described was a "crisis in the policy of the ruling class leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the masses burst forth."

And precisely such a symptom emerged in 1976. Due to the job reservation system whereby only white workers were permitted to perform most (if not all) skilled work in industry, there developed a shortage of skilled workers which the white labour aristocracy could not fill. Thus the very regulations of Apartheid began to be an impediment to the most efficient methods of production and maximisation of profits especially in mining, manufacturing and building. Hence the Wiehahn Commission was established in 1976 (just after the 3 months long Soweto uprising) to discover ways to resolve that problem and to suggest methods of monitoring and controlling the growing independent black trade unions.

Though the main recommendations of professor Wiehahn — the recognition of registered black trade unions, the relaxation of job reservation but with bans on political affiliation and close monitoring of officials' activities, were accepted by most members of the ruling class there were angry noises from some of the most reactionary groups of Afrikaners at even these tiny concessions, which were in reality implemented in 1979 in the interests of capitalist profit and to attempt to emasculate the black unions.

Nevertheless, as the pressure from the masses intensified as South Africa entered the '80s, the Botha Government adopted the slogan 'adapt or die' and declared its intention to implement reforms in order to divert and defeat the rising tide of revolt. Inevitably, this course provoked further "fissures" in the white ruling class, leading to the further evolution of the verlige ('enlightened') and verkrampte ('hard') wings of the National Party which also experienced in 1982 a split (in the form of the breakaway Conservative Party) for only the second time since it came to power in 1948.

And through the widening fissure burst the rising anger amongst the oppressed 23 million blacks, 2.8 million Coloureds and 0.8 million Indians. For when under the new constitution elections were held amongst the Coloured and Indian communities last year in order to separate off these groups from the blacks, they were boycotted to the extent that only 20% of Coloureds and 15% of Indians bothered to vote, showing the utter contempt felt for Botha's stooge parliament

with its built-in white majority and complete lack of representation for blacks! Thus the third symptom of a revolutionary situation listed by Lenin namely when as a consequence of the two previous features "there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses..." became a permanent and growing pressure.

The greatest intensity and scale of revolt has unsurprisingly emerged from within the urban black community, from the townships such as Soweto and the black working class organised in independent trade unions. In the last 9 years membership of the black trade unions has increased inexorably, including a massive rise during 1981-83, to the situation where the majority of organised workers are now blacks and the largest union in South Africa is now the National Union of Mineworkers with 130,000 members. Though the 1.3 million farm workers and 260,000 domestic workers remain unorganised and union membership still constitutes only some 20% of the black workforce those organised have engaged in widespread militant actions.

As the *Financial Times* reported "In 1984, 378,000 man-days were lost in 469 strikes, according to government figures — making it the country's worst strike year on record." (May 10, 1985) And union growth is continuing despite the recession, many workers being even prepared to strike in the face of the threat of the sack. This indeed occurred at the goldmines near Klerksdorp in Western Transvaal where 14,400 black miners were sacked for striking. This clearly indicates an increasing pressure from the rank and file on their leaders to take up political issues such as the abolition of Apartheid regulations such as job reservation and the huge wage differentials (ranging from 1:4 to 1:9) between black and white workers.

The revolt in the townships has erupted repeatedly since Soweto. In September 1984 school boycotts and protest against the new constitution combined with reaction to the worsening poverty produced by rising inflation and unemployment. In February this year 18 people were killed during the demonstrations against moves to evict people at the Crossroads township near Capetown; and on the 25th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre in March, police in armoured cars killed 19 blacks at Langa in the Eastern Cape.

Not only have the fundamental economic, socio-political conditions, the *objective conditions* matured but so has the *subjective factor* developed to a much higher level during the last 9 years. The subjective factor: "...is human activity, conscious activity. From the point of view of the revolutionary process, we can say that the subjective

factor consists of three relatively independent, but closely interacting elements. These are, 1) the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, their determination to make a revolution, 2) the level of the organisation of all the working people, the working class first and foremost, 3) the Communist Party, its capacity to lead and its correct policy — in one sense, a reflection of all the above elements." (R. Yürüköglü, Turkey — *Weak Link of Imperialism, İşçinin Sesi*, 1979)

In concrete terms this means the revolutionary consciousness of primarily the black masses and also the Coloured and Indian masses plus a small section of the white working class and intelligentsia; the level of organisation of not only black, Coloured and Indian workers etc, but also the degree of organisation of the *national liberation forces*, notably the African National Congress (ANC); the political positions and practical leadership of the South African Communist Party (SACP).

As we have seen the black working class has made great strides in the last few years. Nevertheless, only 1.5 million (20%) are organised and the predominantly black independent trade unions remain infected by an economicistic outlook — though such attitudes are being rapidly eroded. In addition, they are still divided into several federations though important negotiations for a united federation to rival the reactionary-dominated TU CSA have met with some success.

Of course, the struggle in South Africa is not simply a struggle for "black workers' power" as various leftist and Trotskyite groups have

pronounced on the basis of their profound ignorance, superficial and vulgar 'Marxism', and total irrelevance to the revolutionary movement in South Africa. For as all blacks, bar a tiny sliver of quisling bourgeois elements (such as Matanzima, boss of the Transkei Bantustan) are oppressed by Apartheid and its capitalist foundation they all, whether worker, student, petty-bourgeois or unemployed have an interest in the overthrow of the Apartheid capitalist state. So to do the great majority of Coloureds and Indians, who though not facing such intense oppression as the black population, still face the degrading, humiliating and brutal structures and laws of Apartheid. The revolutionary struggle in South Africa must be both a struggle for national liberation and a class struggle, with the black workers playing not only a dominant role in each of the phases of the struggle, but a *leading* one.

This is in essence the position of the SACP, a section of the world communist movement, free from the economism so rife in most of the CPs in the imperialist countries. On the central question of the connection between the liberation struggle and

the class struggle, the Central Committee recently stated that:

"...in the struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution, the working class cannot lose the sight of its obligation as the midwife of the socialist revolution. The proletariat is interested not merely in the success of the democratic revolution, but also that this revolution is thorough-going and goes as far as possible in undermining the positions of the monopoly bourgeoisie ..."

"It is also clear that these workers must engage in struggle for a democratic South Africa fully conscious of their unique class interests, the necessity to make their imprint on the democratic revolution and to prepare the condition for an uninterrupted advance from popular democracy to proletarian rule." (*African Communist* No. 101, 1985)

The SACP has in fact been particularly influential within the ANC, seeing itself as "... a vital component of the revolutionary alliance for national liberation headed by the ANC." (*African Communist*, No. 80, 1980)

The ANC itself is regarded by virtually everyone (including the racist rulers of South Africa) as the most powerful and dangerous mass-based revolutionary organisation, except that is by Trotskyites like the WRP who ludicrously claim in *Newsline* that the ANC "has been left standing by the spontaneous movement of the masses" and that it and its "reformist and Stalinist allies are doing their best to stab the black peoples resolute defiance in the back." (February 26, 1985) But then the WRP does live in its own little dream-world (or perhaps theatre) doesn't it.

Those interested in revolutionary, rather than hallucinatory politics, and even those serious bourgeois publications such as the *Financial Times* (who need to have an accurate estimation of the strength of the revolutionary movement in order to defeat it) do recognise the central position, the mass influence of the ANC and its armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe. Thus in the *FT* Supplement of May 10, 1985 A Robinson wrote that "... the underground ANC network has been a potent influence behind the unprecedented geographical spread of recent township unrest."

The key element today is the subjective factor in particular the SACP. It must achieve working class hegemony over the liberation struggle if the masses are not to exchange the chains of Apartheid for the chains of a Robert Mugabe type black bourgeoisie. To avoid this fate it is essential to be guided by Lenin's slogan "march separately, strike together." In other words the workers must maintain a rigid and uncompromising political independence while uniting in action with all revolutionary forces against the main enemy.

John Miller